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**Middle Class and Sufism: The  
Case Study of the Sammaniyya Order Branch of *Shaikh* Al  
Bur'ai**

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to the soul of an  
extra-ordinary Sufi *Shaikh* who managed to revive  
Sudanese tolerant popular Sufism: *Shaikh* Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai

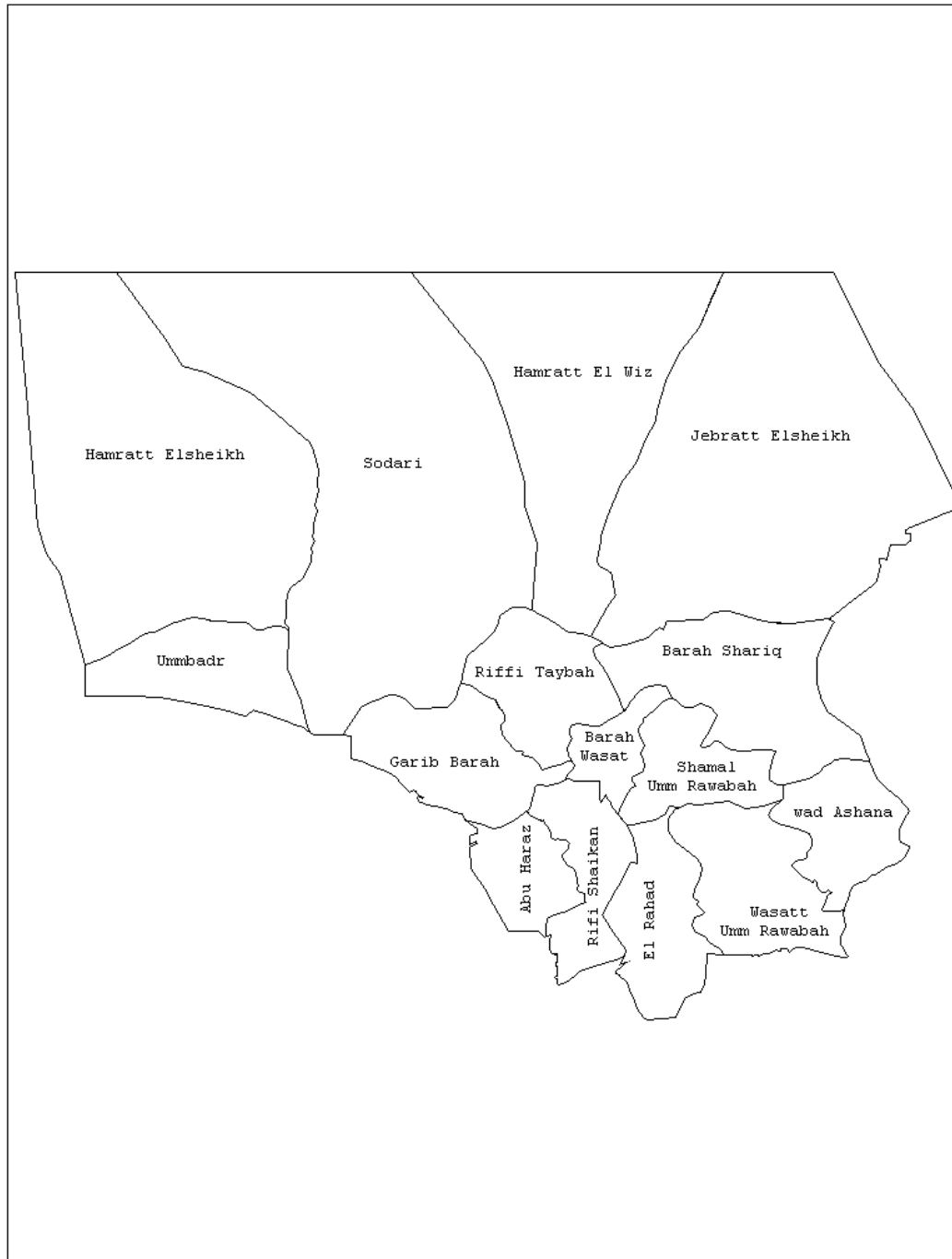
Also the dissertation is dedicated to the Soul of my beloved father  
whose academic discussions while accompanying him in his fourteen years of immobility  
still alive in my memory: My father Prof. Obeid

**A Pictures of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai among his disciples in Al Zariba in Kordofan**



*Shaikh* Al Bur'ai among disciples of men and women

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## Abstract

The emphasis of this research will be on Sufism and the middle class in Sudan, as the target group of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*'s centre. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is a product of the neo-Sufi phenomenon, where ordinary Sufi practices including *karama* making or (miracle doing) are used side by side with orthodox Islam practices. This research explains the increasing appeal of Sufism to urbanites and others who used to be secular in Sudan. The same phenomenon in Sudan is taking place in Morocco, Turkey and Indonesian, where Sufism has had become a conspicuous aspect of urban middle class religiosity.

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* (1923-2005) is one of the most celebrated *Shaikhs* of the Sammaniyya Sufi order in Sudan. He managed to establish an open edged *tariqa* that attracted large sections of the educated Sudanese middle class. Started as an individual Sammani order *Shaikh* in 1944, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* gradually became popular for his unusual abilities of *karama* making, healing and mediation in tribal conflicts. During the 1980s he was able to achieve wide popularity among the middle class, as his poetry was broadcasted, published and propagated by the media. His poetry (*Madih*) which represents a complement to litanies dominated the media in Sudan for the last twenty years. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* found individual solutions to the problems of the Sudanese middle class. In the 1990s, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* appeared as a celebrated national figure who had strong ties with most Sudanese politicians either in the Sudanese government of the *Ingazh* regime or in the opposition circles. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* practiced politics not as a politician but as a social reformer, who had different *Khalawi* providing charity works throughout Sudan.

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai*'s influence is reflected in the transformation into Sufism of large numbers of the youth, intellectuals, professionals and employees of public and private sector. The Sudanese middle class has not been studied thoroughly. In the case of Sudan, the "middle class" is a product of colonialism. This fact led to an identity crisis of the middle class resulted out of the situation of collaboration with colonialism and being leaders of decolonization at the same time This fact resulted in the sequent limitation of the educated strata as a leading political faction. Due to identity crisis the educated middle class was divided into different factions such as the *effendiyya* and turbans which include the educated strata grew out of colonialism "*effendiyya*" and the other strata graduated from religious institution who studied *Shari'a* sciences "the turbans". Later it was divided into the main sectarian political powers and finally it was divided between advocates of secularaism and advocates of *Shari'a*.

The dissertation is trying to answer the question: To what extent the phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* represented the crisis of the middle class in Sudan? The middle class represented the audience target group of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* as it is the most class seriously affected by identity and the economic crises that took place in Sudan since the last thirty years. The educated middle class was economically impoverished and politically marginalized. In particular it is the class that was badly affected by the economic policies and macro-structures of the 1990s that witnessed a total-de-subsidization and the weakening of public sector that coincided with privatization. The process of privatization witnessed thousands of lay-offs. The inability of the dominant Sufi orders to offer a moderate Islamic identity to millions of Sudanese at a time of crisis made *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* a refuge, savior and representative of the moderate tolerant Islam.

## الخلاصة

هذا البحث يهدف لدراسة الصوفية و الطبقة الوسطى فى السودان، حيث تمثل الطبقة الوسطى غالبية مريدى مركز الشيخ البرعى. يمثل الشيخ البرعى نتاج لظاهرة الصوفية الجديدة حيث توجد ممارسات الاسلام الشعبى و الصوفية التقليدية من كرامات و خلافه جنباً الى جنب مع ممارسات الاسلام الاصولى.

هذا البحث يهدف لدراسة التحول المتزايد نحو الصوفية فى المناطق الحضرية التى كانت تتسم بالعلمانية فى السودان. نفس هذه الظاهرة (التحول من العلمانية الى التصوف فى المناطق الحضرية ووسط أفراد الطبقة الوسطى من المتعلمين) توجد فى المغرب، تركيا و أندونيسيا حيث أصبح التصوف مكون مهم فى التحول نحو الدين لدى الطبقة الوسطى الحضرية.

شيخ البرعى (1923-2005) يعتبر أهم شخصية صوفية تنتمى الى الطريقة السمانية فى السودان. نجح شيخ البرعى فى تأسيس طريقة مفتوحة العضوية، جذبت إليها أعداداً كبيرة من المتعلمين من الطبقة الوسطى. بدأ حياته كرجل دين (فكى) تقليدى و تدريجياً أصبح ذائع الصيت بمقدراته غير العادية على الاتيان بالكرامات و علاج المرضى و حل المشاكل القبلية. خلال الثمانينات أصبح مشهوراً و محجة لأفراد الطبقة الوسطى بقصائد المديح التى أصبحت تذاع و تنشر بواسطة وسائل الاعلام وخلال العشرين عاماً الماضية أضحت قصائد المديح- و هى مكمله للأوراد- تحتل مكانة مرموقة فى أجهزة الاعلام السودانية. أَلشيخ البرعى إستطاع أن يوجد حلولاً فردية لمشاكل الطبقة الوسطى.

فى أواخر التسعينات ظهر شيخ البرعى كشخصية قومية لها أواصر قوية مع معظم السياسيين السودانيين فى حكومة الإنقاذ أو فى المعارضة . الشيخ البرعى مارس السياسة ليس كسياسى و لكن كمصلح أجتماعى له خلاوى عدة تقدم العمل الطوعى فى كل بقاع السودان. تكمن أهمية شيخ البرعى فى انه إستطاع أن يحول أعداداً كبيرة من الشباب و متعلمى الطبقة الوسطى، المثقفين و المهنيين و موظفى القطاع العام و الخاص الى التصوف. الطبقة السودانية الوسطى لم تحظ بدراسة كافية ، و فى حالة السودان ولدت الطبقة الوسطى فى العهد الإستعمارى . هذه الحقبة أوجدت بذور أزمة هوية فى الطبقة الوسطى نتجت من أنها الطبقة التى خلقت بواسطة الاستعمار و تعاونت معه وهى نفس الطبقة التى قادت التحرر الوطنى من الإستعمار . هذا الوضع خلق للطبقة الوسطى السودانية أزمة هوية منذ البداية. مما نتج عنه ضعفها و إنقسامها كطبقة رائدة سياسياً. الشئ الذى جعلها منقسمة على نفسها بين الأفندية و أصحاب العمامات، منقسمة بين القوى الطائفية الأنصار و الختمية و بين دعاة الشريعة و العلمانية.

يحاول البحث الإجابة على السؤال الى أى مدى تمثل ظاهرة الشيخ البرعى أزمة الطبقة الوسطى؟ إذ تمثل الحضور الاكبر فى مراكز الشيخ البرعى. و الطبقة الوسطى هى أكثر طبقة تأثرت سلباً بأزمة الهوية وبالأزمة الإقتصادية فى السودان فى خلال الثلاثين عاماً الماضية. خصوصاً هى الطبقة التى تأثرت بصورة كارثية بالسياسات الإقتصادية الكلية التى تبنتها الدولة خلال التسعينات ، و التى شهدت رفع الدعم كلياً عن التعليم و الصحة و السلع الاساسية و تصفية القطاع العام نتيجة الخصخصة و التى نتج عنها الاف المحالين الى الصالح العام.

عدم مقدرة الطرق الصوفية السائدة و الجماعات الدينية فى طرح هوية إسلامية معتدلة للملايين من السودانيين تحت وطأة الازمة السياسية و الاجتماعية جعل من شيخ البرعى منقذاً و ملجأ و ممثلاً للإسلام الوسطى الشعبى.

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## Chapter one

### Social Sciences and Challenges of Studying Islamic and Sufi Revival

#### 1.1 Social Sciences and New Challenges in Studying Islamic Revival

Before the success of Iran Shi'ite revolution in 1978, scientific production in social sciences is very weak in the field of Islamic studies. As described by Bryan Turner they are scarce, inadequate and over-specialized.<sup>1</sup> Much of the Islamic studies are far away from creativity and scientific jumps that took place in the West in different social sciences, especially under globalization in which mass research and information are available throughout the world. New and increasingly global accessible modes of communication have made these contests increasingly global, so that even local disputes take place on transnational dimension.<sup>2</sup> Globalization is a process of historical change, and in modern times it is 'the crystallization of the entire world as a single place' and the emergence of a global condition.<sup>3</sup> Globalizing structures interacting with individuals, households and communities are delivering modernity to some-but-not all-peoples formerly far removed from meaningful participation in cross-border flows of capital, knowledge, information and consumer goods.<sup>4</sup> Under such conditions social sciences face the challenge of being critical enough to update and understand new changes in Islamic societies. The insertion of an Islamic consciousness into the daily political life of many Muslim societies is increasingly becoming an incontestable fact.<sup>5</sup> In different countries such as Sudan, Turkey and Indonesia, this religious consciousness took the form of religiosity of the sectors of societies used to be secular, mainly the middle class.

It is not possible now to talk about orientalism and Orientalists as we used to up to the 1970s in order to condemn them and refuse them and keeping away from their production. It is very important to translate the most important Islamic studies done by these academic Orientalists in order to discuss them on a scientific background based not on ideological and theological base.<sup>6</sup> Arkoun stressed the importance of the revolution made by Bier Bourdio, Alan Turine and Micheal Foucault in the field of history of ideas.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bryan S. Turner, *Weber and Islam: A Critical Study*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London and Boston, 1974, p. 1

<sup>2</sup> Dale F. Eickelman and John W. Anderson, "Redefining Muslim Publics", in Dale F. Eickelman and John W. Anderson (eds.), *New Media in The Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999, p.1.

<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Ahsan, "Globalization and the Underdeveloped Muslim World", in Ali Mohammadi (ed.), *Islam Encountering Globalization*, Durham Modern Middle East and Islamic World Series 2, Routledge Curzon, 2002, p.179.

<sup>4</sup> James H. Muttelman, *Globalization: Critical Reflections*, Lynne Rienner, 1997, p. 1

<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Ahsan, op.cit, p.179.

<sup>6</sup> Mohamed Arkoun, *Al Quran min al Tafsir al Mawruth ila Tahlil al Khitab al Dini* (The Quran: From the Traditional Interpretation to Analyzing Religious Discourse), Translated by Hashim Salih, Dar al Talia', Lebanon, 2001, p.8.

<sup>7</sup> Mohamed Arkoun, *Qadayya fi Naqd al Aql al Dini: Kaifa Nafhm al Islam al Yaum*, Al Tali'aa Publishing House, Lebanon, 2000, p.123.

The contemporary student of the Middle East is faced with several theoretical dilemmas. One of them is the question of the suitability of concepts and theories of class and strata for the analysis of contemporary societies in the Middle East and the explanation of political forces, configurations and events in these terms.<sup>8</sup> Concepts used to the study of Islam, represent the most challenge to researchers in this field.

The aim of the systematic study of religion, in this case Islam, according to Clifford Geertz, is or anyway ought to be, not just to describe ideas, acts, and institutions, but to determine just how and in what way particular ideas, acts and institutions sustain, fail to sustain, or even inhibit religious faith-that is to say, steadfast attachment to some transtemporal conceptions of reality. There is nothing mysterious in this, nor anything doctrinal. It merely means that we must distinguish between a religious attitude toward experience and the sorts of social apparatus, which have, over time and space, customarily been associated with supporting such an attitude.<sup>9</sup>

In trying to make a systematic theoretical framework for any research of Islam, Talal Asad found specific characters that face the researcher. He said, "to conceptualize Islam as the object of anthropological study is not as simple a matter as some writers would have one suppose. According to him, there appear to be at least three common answers to the question posed above. i.e studying Islam:

- i) That in the final analysis there is no such theoretical object as Islam,
- ii) That Islam is the anthropologists label for a heterogeneous collection of items, each of which has been designated Islamic by informants.
- iii) That Islam is a distinctive historical totality, which organizes various aspects of social life.<sup>10</sup>

One of the most ambitious attempts of addressing this question is Ernest Gellner's "Muslim Society", in which an anthropological model is presented of the characteristic way in which social structure, religious beliefs, and political behavior interact with each other in an Islamic totality.<sup>11</sup> According to Gellner, one way in which anthropologists have attempted to resolve the problem of diversity is to adopt the Orientalist distinction between orthodox and non-orthodox Islam to the categories of great and little traditions, and thus to set up the seemingly more acceptable distinction between the scripturalists puritanical faith of the towns and the saint-worshipping, ritualistic religion of the countryside, where Sufi orders usually lies.<sup>12</sup>

On the specificity of Islam Maxim Rodinson states that: "I would just stress here what distinguishes Islam from Christianity and Buddhism, for example. Islam is a theological-political religion, the objective being not only that each individual should seek his own salvation but also that a society be created in conformity with the divine law, the *Shari'a*. Political and social motivations are implied from the very beginning."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Sami Zubaida, Islam, The People and The State: Essays on Political Ideas and Movements in The Middle East, Routledge, London, 1989, p.84.

<sup>9</sup> Clifford Geertz, Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia, The University of Chicago Press, 1968, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Talal Asad, The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam, Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, Occasional Papers series, March 1986, p.1.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.6.

<sup>13</sup> Maxime Rodinson, Marxism and The Muslim World, Monthly Review Press, New York and London, 1981, p. 37.

Islam is a distinct religion in which Qur'an is central as a juridico-religious system. Islam has a distinctive notion of the sacred and a set of rituals that create a definite religious community, namely the '*umma*'. As a religious system, Islam has developed a powerful notion of religious law (*Shari'a*) that regulates the community and determines the nature of the self.<sup>14</sup> The insertion of a new Islamic consciousness into the daily political life of many Muslim societies is increasingly becoming an incontestable fact. In countries like Iran, Sudan, and Afghanistan, state power has been captured by Islamic movements. For others, such as Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia and Turkey, there is deadly intensity with high stakes as numerous civil associations define themselves as Islamic and, as a result, violently challenge the legitimacy of political authority. Even in less contested countries (e.g. Morocco, Pakistan, Indonesia), Islamic consciousness assumes a more prominent place in the articulation and making of political life.<sup>15</sup> For this reason, social sciences are faced with the need to elucidate this current religiosity among different sectors in the Muslim countries.

Some scholars such as Fred Halliday explained the need of dissolving 'Islam' as an object of study in order to have better understanding. He stated:

“ 'Islam' as a social and political system-it should quickly become evident that I do not believe there is much to be gained by regarding the many socio-political realities that the term applies to as part of single phenomenon. As an object of social and political analysis, or as a force in international affairs, there is little that can be explained, praised or denounced by reference to a unitary 'Islam'. What is needed is a full consideration of particular societies and political systems and of the uses, variant across time and place, to which Islamic symbols and doctrines are put. 'Islam' as an object of study must first be dissolved in order to be made concrete in the study of particular events, times and places.”<sup>16</sup>

## 1.2 Hypothesis of The Research

This research will deal particularly with Sufism and examine the way in which its social organizations, political, and religious structure are associated with the *baraka* of a Sufi *Shaikh*. The research will answer the question that to what extent, this *baraka* played a role in the reorganization of large number of the Sudanese middle class around Sufi ideation. The research will deal with the transformation of educated sections of the middle class in Sudan from being secular in 1950s, 1960s, 1970s to be initiated into Sufism after the 1970s.

*Shaikh* Al-Bur'ai was a well known Sufi *Shaikh* in contemporary Sudan. Started as an individual Sammani *Shaikh* in 1940s, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai gradually became popular

<sup>14</sup> Bryan S. Turner, *Weber and Islam*, op.cit., p.2.

<sup>15</sup> Muhammad Ahsan, op.cit., p.179.

<sup>16</sup> Fred Halliday, *Islam and The Myth of Confrontation: Religion and Politics in The Middle East*, I.B.Tauris, London, 1996, p.2.

for his unusual abilities of healing and mediation in tribal conflicts. In the 1980s, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* was able to gain wide popularity from his poetry and through the media.

One of the main questions of this research is that why *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* has been transformed from an individual *faki* in North Kordofan region into a national figure? From field surveys, the writer noticed that the educated middle class in Sudan represents the audience/target group of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. The middle class is the most class seriously affected by the economic crisis took place in Sudan during the last fifteen years. In Sudan the middle class is subjected to a process of disintegrating its secular ideology and being re-building itself on religious ideation.

The main hypothesis of this research is that the Sudanese middle class has disintegrated as a coherent class and de-composed its secular ideology into religious ideation and Sufi ideation in particular. Moreover, the doctrine of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* did not spread by his litanies as the case with most Sufi orders in Sudan, but through popular Sufi poetry (*Madih*). The large followers of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* are mainly audience of his poetry (*Madih*) or his reputation as miracles doer and not of his litanies.

### 1.3 Sources Used in The Study

The sources used in this study are varied. They include five categories, which are:

#### i) Literature written about Islam, which is divided into:

##### a) Descriptive and b) Analytical.

- a) **Descriptive:** They include writings of Reynold A. Nicholson (1916) Akbar Sid Ahmed and David Hart (1984), Klaus Fredinand (1988), Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1991), O'Fahey (1991), Micheal Gilsenan (1992), Julian Johansen (1996), Antony Black (2001), Chandra Muzaffar (2002), Jonathan P. Berkey (2003), Marck J. Sedgwich (2003) and Richard Mc Gregor (2004),

The General characteristics of these writings are:

- 1) Concentrating on studying the Text without relating to its real social structures.
- 2) Studying historical events without relating them to socio-economic and political set up.
- 3) Describing functions of Islamic institutions/*tariqas*.
- 4) Applying the classical model of 'Ulama versus popular religion.

- b) **Analytical:** They include writings of Karl Marx and Fredrick Engles (1955) Maxim Rodinson (1966 and 1981), (1981), Talal Asad (1986), Mohamed Arkoun (1987, 2000), David McLellan (1987), Sami Zubaida (1989), Mohamed Abid al Gabiri (1991), Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid (1999), Gabriel Warburg (1978,1992,2003), John O. Hunwick (1992), Burhan Qiloun (1993), Fred Halliday (1996), Clifford Geertz (1968), Bryan Turner (1978,1984, 2003), Idris Salim (1991)

The general characteristics of these writings are:

- 1) Concentrating on the fact that Islam cannot be studied outside the socio-economic formations.
- 2) Periodization of Islamic *history* according to the economic formations.
- 3) Islam is part of the super-structure and it is a reflection of the social formation.

- 4) Islam contains different and sometimes heterogeneous factors all of them are described as Islam.
- 5) Consideration of the outside factors affecting Muslim societies such as the role of colonialism in the development of Islamic societies.
- 6) Islam is found in specific areas of the world where development of private property is unlike Europe (Asiatic Mode of Production).

## ii) Sammani Literature:

a) Poetry of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* which is not compiled in one volume. Moreover, most of it is in cassettes. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* has a book of Sufi poetry in Arabic Perfect Language (*al Fusha*). However, it does not explain the various developments of the centre of al Zariba in Kordofan and the transformation that *Shaikh Al-Burai'* has gone through.

b) Literature written about *Shaikh Al-Bur'ai* by Sammani disciples: there is a book written by *Shaikh Al-Bur'ai's* disciple and nephew Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed. It includes *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* pedigree and a description of the function of Al-Zariba centre. Also there is a book written by Abdel Latif El Boni & Abdel Latif Saied on *Shaikh Al-Bur'ai* (2000). It tries to give information on the development of the phenomenon of *Shaikh Al-Bur'ai*. However the book has not the scholarly depth needed for such topic. Another book was written by Al Bur'ai's friend Sa'ad El Din Mohammed Ahmed on *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* (2007). He was a high secondary school teacher in El Obeid when he knew Al Bur'ai as early as 1960s. In this book he published his correspondence with Al Bur'ai since early 1960s. It gives the researcher good information about the development of the phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bura'i*

iii) **Literature written about Sudan in the period 1975-2005.** It includes books about the economic and political crisis, as well as reports of international organizations.

vi) **Manuscripts and official documents of the National Records Office:** They include details of Sufi *tariqas* local markets in Sudan, diaries of Kordofan Province, tribal relations, amalgamation of tribes in Kordofan, issues of native administration, letters of District Commissioners to Governor of Kordofan, tribal politics, local politics of Kordofan. This in addition to Kordofan Journal that was issued since 1944.

v) **Interviews:** With *Shaikh Al-Bur'ai* himself, among the family of *Shaikh Al-Bur'ai* and his disciples.

## 1.4 Literature Review: Theoretical Approaches

This section of the research aims to review the different approaches of social sciences that deal with the phenomenon of Islam in general and Sufism in particular. It reviews the challenges faced by each approach in studying Islamic phenomena. It includes survey and evaluation of Weber approach, Marxist approach and Orientalist approach. It also discusses the role of Charisma in Islamic societies. It surveys difficulty



of studying the phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. Moreover, it discusses the concept of the crisis and the concept of the middle class which represent core concepts in analysis of the phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*.

#### 1.4.1 Islam and Weberian Approach

Sociology is a rich, stimulating, innovative, and even a fast-expanding discipline with multidimensional empirical ramifications. But in the field of religion its contributions still appears inadequate and leave a great deal to be studied; and this is so even with the path breaking led by Marx (1867), Weber (1904) and Durkheim (1912).

It is argued that the overall state of the discipline is poorer when it comes to the specific question of Islam. Even as late as 1974, therefore, the British Sociologist Bryan S. Turner was found lamenting as well as fuming: "... sociologists are either not interested in Islam or have nothing to contribute to Islamic scholarship".<sup>17</sup> Anwar went further to elucidate that even when they did focus on Islam, western sociologists were often inconsistent and misleading. This is true of no less a sociologist than Max Weber. But Max Weber is not alone in being inconsistent. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) points out inadequacies and preconceived tunnel visions that mark the vast majority of western scholarly output when it comes to the question of non-western cultures in general, and Islam and Muslims in particular. Max Weber, in particular, was not interested in Islam as a religion as such; his focus was on the Islam that was antithetical to capitalism.<sup>18</sup>

Turner argued that Islam is not thoroughly studied. He says: "In comparison with the established and flourishing literature on other world religions and their associated civilizations, the systematic study of Islam is a neglected field in sociology, phenomenology and history of religions. Indeed, there are hardly any major sociological studies of Islam and Islamic society. A more specific reason may lie in the fact that Marx and Durkheim had little or nothing to say about Islam, while Weber died before his religious *Soziologie* was completed by a full study of Islam".<sup>19</sup> For Turner, this situation alone makes the sociology of Islam an important research priority. This is because there is theoretically crucial importance of Islam: as a prophetic, this worldly, salvation religion, having strong connections with the other Abrahamic religions, Islam is a potential test-case of Weber's thesis of religion and capitalism.<sup>20</sup>

In latter writings, it is stated by Anwar that, in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930) Weber extends the same argument into the economic realm by suggesting a causal nexus between the 'Protestant Ethic', especially of the Calvinistic variant, and rational capitalism. In Weber's view asceticism is a necessary and sufficient condition of rational capitalism, but asceticism has to be placed alongside a number of variables. These variables are identified by him in his *General Economic History* "as characteristics and pre-requisites of capitalistic enterprise the following: appropriation of

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<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Syed Anwar Husain, "Max Weber's Sociology of Islam: A Critique", *Bangladesh Journal of Sociology*, Vol.1, No.1, 2004, p.1

Available at: <http://www.bangladeshsociology.org/Max%20Weber-Anwar%20Hosain,%20PDF.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Bryan S. Turner, *Weber and Islam: A Critical Study*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London and Boston, 1974, p.7.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

the physical means of production by the entrepreneur, freedom of the market, rational technology, rational law, free labour and finally the commercialization of the economic life.<sup>21</sup>

In the debate on the encounters of Middle Eastern societies with Western modernity, Max Weber's contribution is invariably seen as a classical statement of what may be called sociological Orientalism. Most "Third Worldist" and other anti-Orientalist critics locate Weberian and neo-Weberian perspectives within Orientalism as a discourse of Western domination which has remained hegemonic since the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup> With Weber's insistence on the autonomy of cultural factors and the importance of religion in the emergence (and non-emergence) of modern capitalism, the affinity between the Weberian research programme and the Orientalism discourse is perhaps the one inside in the debate not open to dispute.<sup>23</sup>

In studying Islam, Weber started by recognizing that Meccan Islam was a monotheistic religion based on ethnical prophecy which rejected magic. Given that Allah was all-powerful and omniscient, and man predestined, asceticism could have emerged as a solution to a potential 'salvation anxiety'. Weber argued that asceticism was blocked by two important social groups: the warrior group, which was the main social carrier of Islam, and the Sufi brotherhoods, which developed a mystical religiosity.<sup>24</sup> Weber regarded Sufism as a mass religiosity which enabled Islam to reach its conquered subjects through their indigenous symbolism and rituals. Sufi mysticism thus introduced magical, orgiastic element into Islam and watered down its monotheism.<sup>25</sup>

Two points could be emphasized by Weber regarding Islam, according to which Islam was not able to develop into capitalism. Weber does not seem to link the absence of capitalism in Islam to the nonexistence of the prerequisites identified by him. On the contrary, he lists at least two factors responsible for preventing Islam from evolving naturally (*into capitalism*). First, the monotheistic Islam of Mecca failed to develop into an ascetic this-worldly religion because its main carrier was a warrior group. The content of the religious message was transformed into a set of values compatible with the mundane needs of this warrior group. The spiritual element of Islam as a belief system with emphasis on salvation was transformed into the secular quest for mundane gains. The result was that Islam became a religion of accommodation rather than of transformation. Second, the original message of monotheism was subjected to change under the impact of Sufism which catered for the emotional and orgiastic needs of the masses. In consequence, Islam was pulled in two opposite directions by these two groups. The warrior group pulled Islam in the direction of a militaristic ethic; and the Sufis in that of mystical flight. Both the directions of Islam, representing, as it were, a bifurcated Islamic ethic failed to produce, as Weber will have us believe, the prerequisites congruent with the rise of rational capitalism.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, pp.1-2.

<sup>22</sup> Mohamed R. Nafissi, "Reframing Orientalism: Weber and Islam", in Bryan S. Turner (ed.), Islam Critical Concepts in Sociology: Islam, State and Politics, Volume 2, Routledge, London and New York, 2003, p.1.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>24</sup> Bryan S. Turner, Capitalism and Class in The Middle East: Theories of Social Change and Economic Development, Humanities Press, New Jersey, 1985, p. 34

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>26</sup> Syed Anwar Husain, op.cit., p.2.

By far the most influential thesis emerged in the West to explain the modernization and democratization failure of the Islamic world is based on the religio-cultural peculiarities of the Muslim world and, indeed the, the specifics of Islam as a religion and as a sociopolitical order: in other words, the culturalist thesis. The two best-known proponents of this thesis, especially as it concerns democratization, are Samuel P. Huntington and Bernard Lewis. However, it is important to point out that they draw on along tradition of Western culturalist thinking in these matters.

The culturalist thesis has been challenged since it was first expounded by Samuel Huntington in 1993. However, the culturalist argument based on Weberian explanation retains significant influence. According to the thesis the causes of the Islamic world's failure to modernize and democratize must be found in a number of Islamic basic characteristics. Notable among them are the aversion to rational thinking –a prerequisite of any form of modernization- the priority of faith over reason, the community over the individual, and the fusion of the private and public and temporal and spiritual domains. Other characters are that Islam generates a submissive spirit in that its essence is submission to God's will; its communitarian tendencies inhibit individual initiative and innovation; it is introverted and sees the world in terms of a divide between Muslims and non-Muslims; and hence, it is not receptive to new ideas.<sup>27</sup>

Max Weber provided the clearest connection between cultural, notably, religious, characteristics and modernization by ascribing the rise of the modern capitalist system to the Protestant ethic, as developed by John Calvin and those inspired by him. According to Weber,

“A glance at the occupational statistics of any country of mixed religious composition brings to light with remarkable frequency a situation which has several times provoked discussion in the Catholic press and literature, and in Catholic Congresses in Germany, namely, the fact that business leaders and owners of capital, as well as the higher grades of skilled labor and even more the higher technically and commercially trained personnel of modern enterprises, are overwhelmingly Protestant.”<sup>28</sup>

For Weber, “only ascetic Protestantism completely eliminated magic and the supernatural quest for salvation, it alone created the religious motivation for seeking salvation primarily through immersion in one's worldly vocation”. Weber was quite categorical in his assertion that Islam is incompatible with modernization because “the role played by wealth accruing from spoils of war and from political aggrandizement in Islam is diametrically opposed to the role played by wealth in the Puritan religion.”<sup>29</sup>

Weber attributed a number of other characteristics to Islam-which, incidentally, are uncannily similar to those voiced by the contemporary culturalist theorists-that represented Islam as incapable of modernization in every sphere, including economics. According to Weber, “Islam, in contrast to Judaism, lacked the requirement of a

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<sup>27</sup> Shireen Hunter, “Modernization and Democratization in the Muslim World: Obstacles and Remedies”, an article for Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C., April 2004, p.8.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 11

comprehensive knowledge of the law and lacked that intellectual training in casuistry which nurtured the rationalism of Judaism". Weber also stated that Islam lacked asceticism, although there were some ascetic sects among Muslims. However, this was "the asceticism of a martial cast...certainly it was not a middle class ascetic systemization of conduct of life". He added that Islamic asceticism often degenerated into fatalism, and he concluded that, consequently, "Islam was diverted completely from any really methodical control of life by the advent of the cult of saints, and finally by magic."<sup>30</sup> It is concluded by many writers that Weber thinks that Islam is irrelevant to the production of capitalism.<sup>31</sup>

Turner argued that, Weber's treatment and interpretation of Islam is in fact very weakly connected with the specific thesis about Calvinism which Weber first developed in the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism; in practice, Weber's discussion of Islam in general terms is compatible with Marx's sociology, although not with Marxism.<sup>32</sup>

Weber regards Islam as, in many respects the polar opposite of Puritanism. For Weber, Islam accepts a purely hedonist spirit, specially towards women, luxuries and property. Given the accommodating ethic of the Quran, there was no conflict between moral injunctions and the world and it follows that no ascetic ethic of world-master could emerge in Islam. We might be tempted, then, to interpret Weber as arguing that, since asceticism was absent in Islam, this explains the absence of rational capitalism in societies dominated by Muslim culture. In fact, Weber shows that rational, formal law autonomous cities, an independent burgher class and political stability were totally absent in Islam. Furthermore, he showed that with the prebendal feudalism and patrimonial bureaucracy which were characteristic of the Abbasid, capitalism could not emerge. The military and economic conditions of Islamic society were inappropriate for the development of capitalism.<sup>33</sup>

Turner made a link between Weber's views on Islam and Marx' concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production. He stated that Karl Marx came to develop Weber's ideas under the concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production. More importantly, it can be shown that Weber's 'patrimonial domination' is conceptually very similar to Marx's outline of Asiatic society.<sup>34</sup> In his discussion of the Asiatic Mode of Production, Marx is stressing the undifferentiated nature of city and countryside, the absence of communal interests and the arbitrariness of state intervention, came close indeed to Weber's analysis of Islamic society in terms of patrimonialism. For Weber, the key features of Islam were the absence of towns, arbitrary law and state interference in trade. Furthermore, Weber was obviously aware of Marx' views on Oriental despotism and agreed with them. In his own study of Indian society, Weber remarks:

"Karl Marx has characterized the peculiar position of the artisan in the Indian village-his dependence upon fixed payment in kind

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim, *Al Shari'a wa Al Hadatha: Mabhath fi Gadal al Asl wa al 'Asr, (Shari'a and Modernity: A Debate in Tradition and Modernity)*, Dar al Amin, Cairo, 2004, p. 27. (in Arabic).

<sup>32</sup> Bryan S. Turner, *Weber and Islam*, op.cit., p. 8

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 14

instead of upon production for the market-as the reason for the specific 'stability' of the Asiatic people. In this Marx was correct."<sup>35</sup>

Turner found that it was Engles who grasped the peculiar uncertainty of property and person in Oriental society which was the heart of Weber's legal and economic commentary on Islam. It was Engles who noted the incomparability of despotism and capitalism, Engles stated:

"Turkish, like any other oriental domination, is incompatible with a capitalist economy; the surplus value extorted is not safe from the hands of greedy satraps and pashas. The first basic condition of bourgeois acquisition is lacking; the security of the person and the property of the trader."<sup>36</sup>

Turner argued that, when Weber came to analyze Islam, he focused on the political, military and economic nature of Islamic society as a patrimonial form of domination. He treated the role of values as secondary and dependent on Islamic social conditions. In so far as Weber did adhere to that position, his analysis was not far removed from Marx and Engles who claimed that the Asiatic mode of production, characteristic of India, China and Turkey, produced an enduring social order which was incompatible with capitalism. In studying the contemporary literature on the history of the Islamic Middle East, Turner stated that, "I can find nothing which radically and substantially falsifies Weber's description of Islam as a patrimonial order. If Weber did hold to this interpretation that Islamic industrialization was impeded by the instabilities created by its politico-military structure, then his achievement was truly remarkable."<sup>37</sup>

In the study of Weber on Islam there are three related arguments, which need to be distinguished at the outset. The first line of argument is that one can detect at least four different Weberian theses about the connection between religious beliefs and capitalism. These four theses can not be successfully reconciled in one coherent Weberian theory about the secular significance of religious doctrines. Hence any attempt to consider Islam as a test case of Weber's sociology must be a complex process. According to Turner, Weber stressed the wrong question about Islam. His main concern was to explain the absence of rational capitalism outside Europe, but the real sociological issue is to explain the transition of Islam from a monetary economy to an agricultural, military regime.<sup>38</sup>

Weber assumed that two related socio-political types of conflict constitute the dominant material preconditions of the emergence of Islam. The first is the struggle for political control of the Arabian Peninsula by outlying states and the second is the continuous conflict between town and desert, that is between urban trading groups and nomadic tribes. The pre-Islamic history of Arabia can be seen in terms of the changing

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<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Ibid. p.15.

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in Ibid. pp.15-16.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p.21.

<sup>38</sup> Bryan S. Turner, "Islam, Capitalism and the Weber Thesis", *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 25, no.2, June 1974, p.230.

relationships between empires, buffer states and towns with their surrounding nomadic clients.<sup>39</sup>

Because of political disintegration in “South Arabia”, it proved impossible to repair the Ma’rib dam when it broke again in 570. The result was that large areas of fertile land fell into disuse and were reclaimed by nomadic tribes from sedentary society. What von Grunebaum has called the crisis of ‘rebedouinization’, involving a shift in power away from settled communities to nomads, was yet another factor in the emergence of Mecca as a major trade and commercial centre in the peninsula. Mecca was able to acquire the remains of Yemenite trade. The lengthy wars between Persia and Byzantium had, in addition to weakening their economies, made trade routes in the Gulf and Red Sea unsafe. The result was that coastal trade through Mecca and Yathrib became increasingly important.<sup>40</sup> The writer thinks that though Islam encourages trade as an economic activity, it does not accept completely capitalist system. The inner built of Islam restricts accumulation of capital and therefore mechanism of capitalism.

In the above discussion, Weber’s argument could be refuted in the light of Edward Said’s construction of Orientalism as a discourse of domination. The ideas of Said and his radical followers will be shown to reset on the theoretical and political foundations laid by the emergence of the Soviet bloc in the twentieth century. Weber’s designation as the major sociological progenitor of neo-Orientalism rests on three related assumptions:

- i) Weber shared the Orientalists view of the superiority of the West over the rest,
- ii) Weber’s comparative causal account of the ‘uniqueness of the West’ rested on an ‘internalist’ research programme which discards or down plays the role of colonialism and imperialism in blocking the development of the Orient,
- iii) The religion-based civilizational aspect of Weber’s comparative sociology ascribed a unity, autonomy and primacy to religion and culture which ‘below him’ (perhaps unwittingly) into the very territory originally charted and claimed by the Orientalists.<sup>41</sup>

The Weberian approach, as well, has been criticized by Nazih Ayubi who argue that:

“Max Weber and (in one way or another) the majority of ‘Orientalists’ have looked for factors within Muslims societies themselves, and have considered these factors to be responsible for [Muslim societies] stagnation.... This approach overlooks that fact that both the Muslim world, as well as the rest of Asia and Africa, which were not dominated by Islamic influence, were stagnating, and that this was occurring in correspondence with the colonial expansion of Europe. If development did not take place, then it must have been because of an ‘external’ factor- because of colonialism which dominated politically and

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<sup>39</sup> Bryan S. Turner, *Weber and Islam*, op.cit, p. 28

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 29

<sup>41</sup> Mohamed R. Nafissi, op.cit, p. 3

exploited economically, and which also led to cultural humiliation and the loss of self-confidence”.<sup>42</sup>

After more than a century of global integration and transformation, there is a significant break between Weber’s choice of internal factors and his research programme and the ‘internalism’ of the contemporary writers. While Weber’s comparative sociology was legitimately premised on the relative isolation of civilizations, the same cannot be said for Lewis, Huntington or Kramer (Lewis 1990, 1995; Huntington 1993, 1996; Kramer 1996). These writers can therefore be criticized for ignoring or downplaying the part played by the international factors, whereas Weber should not.<sup>43</sup>

Weber came to be seen an ‘internalist’, and above all a cultural-religious reductionist, because this how his work was received and read in comparative reference to Marxism. Turner’s elaboration of capitalism and Islam addresses the presumption of Weber’s anti-Orientalist critics. He argues:

“Was it the case that Islam’s ethic of worldly pleasure in some way caused the absence of rationality in law and the absence of a free market and independent city like? This is certainly not Weber’s position. His argument is the opposite. Weber shows that with the prebendal feudalism and patrimonial bureaucracy which were characteristic of the Abbasid, Mamluk and Ottoman dynasties, the pre-requisites of rational capitalism could not emerge...Although Weber continually slips into the position of plural causality and causal indeterminacy, the overall thrust of his study of Islam is that Islamic society was one characterized by patrimonial domination which made political, economic and legal relations unstable and arbitrary, or irrational in Weber’s sense.”<sup>44</sup>

Weber’s study of Islam could be criticized as follows: The first point for criticizing the Weberian construct of Islam is that he did not make any real attempt to show the intermeshing between two perspectives. The Islamic ethic is constructed from a study of seventh-century Islam in Mecca and Madina. The analysis of patrimonialism was linked with the emergence of a military bureaucracy under the Umayyads and its perfection under the Ottomans. One plausible explanation for the failure to connect these two individually strong perspectives is that, as Turner suggests, “... Weber thought that a religion was indelibly stamped by its early history, particularly by its original carriers”. But evidentially this is a fallacy. All religions of the world underwent changes as carrier and time changed.<sup>45</sup> Second, the construct of Islamic ethic is factually wrong on two counts. In the first place, for reasons of his perfunctory approach Weber glossed over urban and commercial aspects of the early as well as later Islamic society. As Professor

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<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Ibid., p. 7

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. p. 8

<sup>44</sup> Bryan. S. Turner, *Weber and Islam*, op.cit., pp.13-14.

<sup>45</sup> Syed Anwar Husain, op.cit, p.3.

Montgomery Watt has shown Islam emerged in an essentially commercial and urban environment of Mecca and flourished in the oasis settlement of Madina. Much of the theological basis of the teachings of Islam is taken up with the problems of commercialism and the very terminology of the Quran is rich with commercial concepts. Most Islamicists would agree with G. E. Von Grunebaum's judgment that the Prophet's "piety is entirely tailored to urban life". An overview of Islamic economy suggests at least three objectives: respect for private property, promotion of a free market of exchange of goods and services, and minimizing the rich-poor gap.<sup>46</sup>

With the recent rise of 'political Islam' to the position of the 'dominant idiom in the politics and culture' in the Middle East and North Africa, the current phase of the debate more than ever concentrates on what is seen as the Weber question par excellence: Whether the region can be understood in terms of transnational 'Muslim society' (Gellner, 1981) or an essentially self-enclosed 'Islamic Civilization' (Lewis, 1990; Huntington, 1993, 1996) competing and clashing with other similarly bounded and enduring civilizations.<sup>47</sup>

Political Islam to be sure, has become a dominant idiom, but first, this is a 'modern' development and second;

"Many different and even contradictory interests, ideas, sentiments and aspirations are being expressed in terms of this {Islamist} idiom. In this respect, it has replaced nationalism and socialism Marxism which played a similar role in earlier decades. As such, it does not represent a unitary ideology or world view, but expresses many different ones".<sup>48</sup>

The rise of Islamism itself would be inexplicable without colonialism, the Cold War, the creation and expansion of Israel, and oil, all of which on balance have tended to undermine democratic forces, religious and secular, retarded the formation of independent classes and accountable states. At the same time, the incorporation of 'Muslim society' into the 'global society' of the past two hundreds years has irrevocably pluralized the former, over and above pre-existing sectarian diversities, and increasingly subjected the Middle Eastern states to the norms and standards of rational capitalism and bureaucratic organization. This process has given rise to agencies of secularization as well as to liberal or cultural level at present (and their strength varies in different states) tied to the powerful centres of the world economy outside the Muslim world. In contrast, intra-Islamic trade and economic ties are relatively insignificant.<sup>49</sup>

Compared to that of the other entire major world religions and ideologies, the fundamental message of Islam appears particularly solid. With its single supreme and historically authenticated holy book, a Prophet who founded a state and presided over the community of believers in historical and documented times, and unified the temporal and spiritual realm in many practices and institutions. The golden age of Mohammad's reign was brief and the conditions for its revival no longer exist. But this does not alter the fact

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid, (Grunebaum, 1970: 33)

<sup>47</sup> Mohamed Nafissi, op.cit., p. 15

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 16.



that, in contrast to other golden ages at the core of other religious and secular revolutionary movements, the Islamic one is historically grounded and retains a civilizational reach that transcends sectarian and national divides.<sup>50</sup>

The big break comes with modernity and the global ascendancy of the West. This development was a double-edged sword. The exposure of the relative decline and stagnation of Muslim countries and the glaring superiority of the Western model threatened and introduced them to a set of choices hitherto inconceivable: abandoning the Islamic traditions; modernizing Islam by reinterpreting or emphasizing the Islamic precepts consonant with the Western model; or attempting to resurrect or erect a distinct Islamic model. In the twentieth century all three have been attempted, but only with the victory of the Iranian revolution did the third come to have the backing of a particular state.<sup>51</sup>

Gellner's decontextualized claim that 'Islam, is of the three great Western monotheisms, the one closest to modernity' is difficult to dispute. And Islamic universalism and inclusivism and respect for 'people of the book' certainly go a long way towards explaining why, in Islamic history, 'sectarian strife and religious persecution ...are...rare and untypical and never reached the level of intensity of the great religious wars and persecution in Christendom'. But today what are at stake are the unequal rights of women, religious minorities, secularists and atheists under the *Shari'a*. All are now variously disadvantaged, *de facto* or *de jure*, in Muslim countries where they were once privileged compared to their counterparts in Christendom and elsewhere.<sup>52</sup>

Differently, from the vantage point of democratic modernity, the problem may not be so much that the classical traditions have been newly interpreted to suit the political objectives of the Islamist and traditionalists; the absence of genuine religious reformation, the problem may rather lie in the fact that Islam's 'scripturalism', celebrated by Gellner is being only too faithfully followed. In the changed historical context, even some of Islam's 'progressive' traditions can therefore both act as 'autonomous' obstacles to modernization and provide a deep-rooted basis for popular mobilization to reverse its advances.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p.18

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 19

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in Ibid. p. 20

<sup>53</sup> The currently hegemonic Islamism revolves around three inter-related elements. First, the application of *bona fide* Islamic practices and codes on the basis of *Shari'a*. This gives the Islamist movements not just a transnational 'idiom', but also a wide range of entrenched popular practices, rituals, values and institutions that can be employed in setting its distinct agenda and mobilizing popular support. Opposition to and, where possible, removal of the signs of Western domination and cultural imperialism is a second element of the Islamist political strategy which provides it with along-standing and highly visible enemy. The two are inseparable: the assertion or re-assertion of Islamic codes or the ban on alcohol is at the same time the elimination or restriction of practices associated with Western domination and *vice versa*.

The establishment of Islamic community-states on the basis of and approximating to 'Islam as a total way of life' is the third element of the Islamist project. It consists of several phases, beginning with Islamizing further the actually existing Islamic states and, where possible, capturing state power on the way to eventually uniting the whole of Islamdom. Once Islam is restored to a position approximating to its former glory, the stage may be set for liberation of the non-Islamic world. The phases of this process are related to each other in a way akin to the minimum and maximum programmes of communist movements. In one form or another, *Shari'a* has always been entrenched both in the state constitution and legal systems of all Muslim countries and in the everyday life of believers. However in failing to achieve economic, political and cultural power superior to that of the rival models-secular, or Islamic of the liberal and

### 1.4.2 Islam and Orientalism

The critical analysis of Orientalism as a scientific approach to study Muslim communities was developed by Edward Said's book '*Orientalism*' published in 1979. On the one hand, Edward Said's *Orientalism*, advanced a comprehensive critique of Western, particularly English, French and American, writings on the Middle East, ranging from the eighteenth century to the present day, and encompassing literature, history, political and other sciences. Under the influence of Said's critique, a range of works has been produced which has viewed academic and other writings on the region as, variously, Eurocentric, imperialist, racist, essentialist, and so forth.<sup>54</sup>

One of the most debated issues in the analysis of the contemporary Middle East has been that of '*Orientalism*', the question of whether Western writings on the region over the past century or two has been, and continues to be, distorted by a set of prejudices born of European and imperial preconceptions. This is not an issue that was first raised by Islamists, but it is one that they have readily adopted in their use of terms derived from the debate- 'euro-centric', 'ethnocentric' and 'Orientalist' itself- to criticize ideas or analyses with which they disagree. The debate on orientalism also goes to the heart of the debate on Islam, because behind it lies the much broader question of what set of terms, general theories and values we should adopt in approaching Middle Eastern (Muslim) societies. A disentangling of the arguments around Orientalism may therefore serve not only to clarify some issues of method, of how to analyze, but also to illuminate the question that has been most central to this book as a whole, namely the explanation of the contemporary Middle East, and not least of the Islamist movements it has generated.<sup>55</sup>

Said's critique, beyond identifying a body of literature as 'orientalist', seeks to relate it to theories of discourse and power, especially through the work of Michel Foucault. Within this approach, Orientalism is a discourse of domination, both a product of European subjugation of the Middle East, and an instrument in this process. Its constituent ideas can be explained by this origin and instrumentality; one that denies the culture and history of the subjugated peoples, and which ignores the process of resistance they have generated in response to this domination. The ideas of Orientalism are functional to this project of domination, or imperialism. If Said is especially insistent on the distortions imposed upon his own people, the Palestinians, he develops a broader critique of writings on the Middle East, and indeed on the whole of the Third World, derived from this article, Foucauldian perspective.<sup>56</sup>

'Orientalism' as a concept has been criticized as being rather vague, since its usage implies that the Middle East is in some ways special, at least in the kind of imperialist or oppressive writings produced about it. Racist or oppressive writing is found about all subject peoples, whether they are Islamic or not, and there is nothing to choose between them. The claim of a special European animosity towards Arabs, let alone towards Palestinians or Muslims, does not bear historical comparisons. Such ideas of

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reformist varieties-Islamism will not only fail to unify Muslim societies, it will at the same time destabilize and divide its own social constituency and undermine the religious traditions which it champions.

<sup>54</sup> Fred Halliday, op.cit., p.199.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p.195

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p.200.

persecution rest on some implicit yardstick, a comparative 'massacrology' in which the wrong done to one people are deemed greater. Such an approach is best avoided, but it may be pointed out that the fate of the native people of the Americas, whose conquest was also presented as a crusade, was far worse than that of the people of 'Islam'.<sup>57</sup>

### 1.4.3 The Marxist Theoretical Frame Work

The importance of the Marxist theoretical frame work lies in the fact that it paved the way for studying social and economic factors affecting society that practice specific religion. Maxime Rodinson, a Marxist scholar stated that:

"I refused to see religion as something outside of or above social factors, with immutable features that could not be changed when there was a change in the society that practiced the religion".<sup>58</sup>

While there is in this Marxist analysis a basis for constructing a radical tradition of Marxist perspectives on the Middle East, Marxist theory suffers from difficulties which are not all that different from the ideological and theoretical difficulties of sociology in general. At one level, Marxism is no more an indigenous tradition in the Middle East than is Durkheimian sociology. Since Marx and Engels were primarily concerned with the theoretical analysis of the capitalist mode of production in order to understand the capitalist societies of Europe, the relevance of their theoretical work for the analysis of modes of production, the state and class struggle in the Middle East is by no means self evident. The work of conceptualizing pre-capitalist modes of production, and the development of the capitalist mode of production under colonialism, has barely begun so far as the Marxism of the Middle East is concerned, and Marxist research is as underdeveloped as is the sociology of the Middle East as an area study.<sup>59</sup>

Marxism suffers from a theoretical continuity, of basically Hegelian variety, which links together Bauer, Marx, Borochoy and, in the modern period Avineri. The common theme is that socialism is an historical necessity, which is achieved through various stages in history, and that the ultimate solution of the 'the Jewish Question' is socialism via a prior process of proletarianisation. In short, Borochovism and related arguments rest upon teleological, historicist interpretation of Marxism, which are rooted in Hegelianism. For example, the revolt of Abdel Qader against the French forces was dismissed by Engles as the 'hopeless' struggle of the 'the barbarian state of society', while the French conquest was welcomed as 'an important and fortunate fact for the progress of civilization. Engles' interpretation of these events is based on two major assumptions that influenced Marxism in its dealing with Islamic societies The first is that the social formations of the Oriental world are stagnant and that capitalism has a historical role to play in smashing the pre-capitalism modes of production which dominate these formations. The second assumption is that 'small nations', or the revolts

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 211

<sup>58</sup> Maxime Rodinson, *op.cit.*, p.75.

<sup>59</sup> Bryan S. Turner, *Marx and the End of Orientalism*, Goerge Allen and Unwin, London, 1978, p.3.

of minority groups, do not contribute to the development of capitalism as a system of global economic relationships. These two assumptions produced the political view that nationalist uprisings, popular protests and tribal opposition to the historical role of capitalism were necessarily reactionary.<sup>60</sup>

As far as religion is concerned, the contributions of Marxists to the understanding of religion seems, often in contrast to those writings in a Weberian or Durkheimian tradition, to be usually very poor. Although Marx said little about religion, most of what he did say-connected with the subject of alienation.<sup>61</sup> For Marx, religion is an instrument of class rule, an ideological bulwark of the dominant class. However, in two main works, the *German Ideology* and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx recognized a role for religion to play in history. He stated that:

“Men make their own history, but they do not make it under circumstances directly chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirit of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language.”<sup>62</sup>

Ironically perhaps, given the structuralism more usually attributed to him (a structuralism which certainly characterizes many of his most important works), it is Marx who, in the above mentioned citation of the opening passage of the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* famously declares, ‘men make their own history, but not of their own free will, not under circumstances they themselves have chosen’. This brief passage, though frequently cited, is often dismissed as unrepresentative of Marx’s writings along the lines that if you write enough you will invariably stumble across insights more profound than the schema within which you are working. This is to do Marx a considerable disservice. For while it would perhaps be wrong to follow John-Paul Sartre in viewing this statement as the central thesis of historical materialism itself (1968), it is far from unrepresentative of Marx’s historical writings. Indeed, similar sentiments are expressed in the third of Marx’s *Theses on Feuerbach of 1842*.<sup>63</sup>

In each of these passages, Marx seems to be suggesting that while agents do indeed fashion the world they inhabit (agency causes structure), the context or circumstances in which this occurs affects their ability to do so (structure constrains conditions agency). Thus the task of the Marxist historian and critic of religion was to

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp.4-5.

<sup>61</sup> David McLellan, *Marxism and Religion: a Description and Assessment of the Marxist Critique of Christianity*, Macmillan Press, 1987, pp.3-4

<sup>62</sup> Karl Marx, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte”, in *Selected Works*, Volume 1, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1955, p. 247

<sup>63</sup> Colin Hay, *Political Analysis*, Palgrave, New York, 2002, pp.117-118

display the connection of religion with the developing productive forces in society, the increasing division of labour and the consequent class struggle. For as, he remarked, religion was 'from the outset consciousness of the transcendental arising from actually existing forces. In this respect religion was just like other forms of ideology, only more so. And thus it had even less of an autonomous history than did other forms of ideology.'<sup>64</sup>

In Marx's strongly determinist view in which 'intellectual production changes its character in proportion as material production is changed, religion was seen as a mere reflection. Marx allowed a positive role to religion in the historical process as being as necessary a preliminary to socialism as was capitalism:

"From his historical point of view, his inversion represents a transitional phase which is necessary in order to force the majority of humanity to produce wealth for itself by inexorably developing the productive forces of social labour which alone can constitute the material basis for a free human society. It is necessary to go through this antagonistic form, just as it is necessary at first to give man's spiritual forces a religious form by erecting them into autonomous power over against him."<sup>65</sup>

In *Capital* Marx alludes to the domination of the Catholic religion in feudal society but denies that this is a counter-example to the materialist conception of history: The Middle Ages could not live on Catholicism, nor could the ancient world on politics. On the contrary, it is the manner in which they gained their livelihood which explains why in one case politics, in the other case Catholicism, played the chief part. And this remark was expanded into a whole new version of historical materialism by such structuralist-inspired Marxists as Althusser and Poulantzas. But again, Marx offered no explanation of the mechanism by which religion was dominant in feudal society, apart from a dubious generalization about the inevitable rise of middlemen in all spheres of society- 'in religion God is pushed into the background by the "mediator", and the latter is again shoved back by the priests, who are the inevitable mediators between the good shepherd and his flock-a view expressed in the context of the rise of capitalist farmers in sixteenth-century England. i.e. just the time when 'priestly' power was declining.<sup>66</sup>

Marx attributed the notion of Asiatic Mode of Production to study Asiatic societies. Following a suggestion made by Engels to Marx that the absence of private property in land was 'the key to the whole of the East', Marx at first stressed the significance of environmental factors for property relations. The centralized state in Asia dominated the whole social order because of the peculiar requirements of large-scale public works: climate and territorial conditions, especially the vast tracts of desert, extending from the Sahara, through Arabia, Persia, India and Tartary, to the most elevate Asiatic highlands, constituted artificial irrigation by canals and waterworks the basis of Oriental agriculture.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> David McLellan, op.cit, pp.19-20

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp.24-25.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>67</sup> Bryan S. Turner, *Capitalism and Class*, op.cit., p.23.

Marx and Engels had no romantic illusions about the virtues of peasant society and the feudal mode of production. On the contrary, they saw capitalism as a revolutionary force, sweeping away the 'rubbish' of past centuries, destroying religious illusions and breaking up feudal social relations.<sup>68</sup>

One could conclude from this statement that, while Marx and Weber shared a common comprehension of the dynamism of the capitalist mode of production, they differed fundamentally in their evaluation of capitalism. While Marx looked forward beyond capitalism to socialism and thereby treated capitalism as progressive, Weber anticipated 'a polar night of icy darkness' in which freedom would be curtailed by bureaucracy, and religious enthusiasm by calculating rationality.<sup>69</sup>

In latter writings of Marxists in the Islamic society, Maxim Rodinson questioned why capitalism or modern capitalism did not appear in the Islamic world? He stated that:

"We have up to now been considering the economic teachings of Islam, expressed in the Koran and the Sunnah. We have seen that these teachings did not condemn in principle, or hinder in practice, the development of what has here been called the capitalistic sector of the economy. Now we must proceed further. In fact, a capitalistic sector of the same type existed in Western Europe in the Middle Ages. It developed in such a way as to produce what is variously described as 'modern capitalism' or 'the capitalist socio-economic formation'. However, a development like this did not occur in the Muslim world, or at least not before the nineteenth century, and there are reasons to think that it was then due to external influences. Is the cause of this unevenness of development to be found, perhaps, in the nature of the Muslim religion or more broadly, in the ideology of the Muslim world in the Middle ages, which may have been less favourable than the ideology of Christian Europe to an evolution of this kind?<sup>70</sup>

Like Weber, Maxim Rodinson explained that Islam did not help in the appearance of capitalism. Though he adopted different approach but he reached the same conclusion.

#### **1.4.4 Islam and Charismatic Leader**

Studying the phenomenon of a Sufi *Shaikh*, such as *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, necessitates studying the notion of charismatic leader. Charismatic leader always appears under crisis situations. A charismatic leader is only successful when his message is appropriated by powerful social groups who accommodate the new doctrine to their group or class interests. When this formulation is applied to Muhammad and Islam, Weber argued that the Prophet's world-view became socially significant only after it had

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<sup>68</sup> Bryan Turner, *Weber and Islam*, op.cit, p.76.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Maxim Rodinson, *Islam and Capitalism*, Penguin Books, 1974, p.76.

been accepted and re-fashioned by Bedouin tribesmen in like with their life-style and economic interests.<sup>71</sup>

As early as 1960s, Watt Montgomery Watt talked about the Charismatic community in Islamic societies. His contribution is based on Weber's study. Watt stated that the conception of the Charismatic leader is a relatively familiar one. By this is meant a leader who is marked out by gift or charisma which raises him above the mass of men, and a virtue of which men are drawn to follow him.<sup>72</sup> He stated further that in Islam in the figure of the founder, Muhammad there is clearly a charismatic leader, in whom the aspects of king and the Prophet are obvious.<sup>73</sup>

Charismatic leaders appear in the era of crisis. A period of radical social change which causes distress and dissatisfaction among segment of the population or a group of people cut off from the main stream of society is generally acknowledged as the typical environment within which a charismatic leader will arise. Institutionalized religion has a well developed tradition or ideology and has been dealing with the problem of meaning in life for generations, but at times it can be resistant to change. The individual stream of a consciousness is more flexible, but the answers which ordinary individuals formulate for their ultimate concern in life are usually not creative. Charismatic leaders on the other hand face the treat of chaos which is disruptive by formulating their own answers to the problem of meaning in life. Because their problems turn out to be wide spread among the populace, the charismatic leaders' individual solutions to their ultimate concerns in life may meet the standards of many others in the same society. People in the society begin to notice that the charismatic leader provides answers to the same problems which had been bothering them.<sup>74</sup>

The disciples of a charismatic leader attempt to stabilize their status within the movement by making the demands of adherents more compatible with the demands of everyday life. Specially, the demands of adherence to charisma are made increasingly compatible with familial and economic necessities which arise from the particular status position of disciples.<sup>75</sup> So far the traditional sociological view of charisma which stresses the innovative character of charismatic messages and focuses on the concept of breakthrough has been followed. While Weber certainly does regard charisma as unstable and creative, in his actual use of 'charisma' as a concept Weber often minimizes the inventive aspects of charismatic movements. The Prophet, who was for Weber the epitome of charismatic leadership, based his message on an appeal to an idealized past in order to break with a corrupt present. Charisma may, therefore, be based on traditional norms rather than representing a distinct break with them.

If we take the category of religious charismatics, their claim to authority is often based on a special message from some divine source which is communicated by visions or voices. It is sometimes claimed that religious experiences are proof, or at least evidence, for the existence of the unseen world and that these experiences are capable of

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid, p. 23

<sup>72</sup> Watt Montgomery Watt, "The Conception of the Charismatic Community in Islam", Numen, Vol.7, Fasc.1, Published by Brill Academic Publishers, January 1960, p.77.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p.78.

<sup>74</sup> Douglas F. Barnes, "Charismatic and Religious Leadership: A Historical Analysis", Journal for Scientific Study of Religion, Vol.17, No.1, Published by Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, March 1978, p.4.

<sup>75</sup> Maxim Rodinson, Islam and Captialism, op.cit., p. 24

providing new insight and fresh knowledge of the divine. The underlying assumptions of conventional ties of charisma must be that the charismatic message is preceded by charismatic experiences in which he receives his special gift and his special message.<sup>76</sup>

It is stated by Turner that: "As a consequence of the "above" considerations of the notion of charisma in Weber's sociology, the traditional view that charisma is the dynamic element in Weber's theory of social change and that Weber employed the concept of charisma to demonstrate the independence of ideas and motivation in social change must be questioned. On the contrary, Weber's analysis of charisma seems to me a pessimistic doctrine about the socio-economic limitations which curtail the social impact of charismatic ideas and charismatic enthusiasm. Whatever, Weber's intention may have been, he seems to show that pure motive of calling and devotion are corrupt by private, utilitarian interests in booty and other rewards".<sup>77</sup>

To Dekmejian and Wyszomirski, the concept of charisma has generated wide discussion and controversy among scholars (specially in 1960s). Some have criticized it for its elusiveness, others have openly challenged its utility as an analytical tool. Admittedly, certain of Weber's proponents have used charisma somewhat indiscriminately thereby adding to the existing confusion regarding the meaning of the term. Weber's original writings can be cited as a source of ambiguity. In discussing the relative importance and interaction of the psychological and social aspects of charismatic authority, he emphasized the former, e.g. the leader's possession of a 'gift of grace', independent from the social context. Despite this emphasis, however, he went on to recognize the need for the social acknowledgement of charisma, in the absence of which the leader's possession of this 'gift' becomes socially insignificant. Dekmejian and Wyszomirski went further to clarify that, the occurrence of charisma is tied to the interaction of a variety of complex factors. These interacting factors or preconditions include:

1-A situation of acute social crisis. This is characterized by a pathological response of society arising from the breakdown of existing mechanisms of conflict resolution. In such times irrational, schizophrenia-like dis-orientation occur creating a deep sense of psychological dependence and heightened expectation. At the political level, a crisis in legitimacy engulfs the system, its leaders, ideology and institutions. The prevailing milieu of mass alienation, social atomization and identity crisis renders the populace vulnerable to mass appeals.

2-An exemplary personage: In the absence of such a personality the charismatic cycle will not begin, conversely, the process cannot be initiated without circumstances of turmoil, regardless of a leader's charismatic potential. The simultaneous occurrence of these initial prerequisites may trigger the charismatic cycle depending on a number of intervening variables. These are related to the process by which the leader projects himself upon the society in crisis, and are listed below.

3- Performance-message: the self-revelation of the potential charismatic is effected through heroic performance and its concomitant message, These two components are mutually reinforcing where the leader's performance may

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<sup>76</sup> For more information see Ibid., pp.25- 26.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 28.



represent the unfolding of his message; or conversely, the message may contain his program for heroic activity.<sup>78</sup>

In the case of *Shaikh* Al Burai. The researcher found that this type of charisma depends on *karama* making or possession of supernatural powers. His poetry was utilized as a tool for injecting new religious consciousness among the different generations, specially the educated middle class. This point will be more elaborated in the coming chapters.

#### 1.4.5 Social Science and Studying Biography of Charismatic leaders

Studying the biography of any charismatic figure depends on studying the extent an individual can play a role in history. Karl Marx has explained this in his inaugurating paragraph of his *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bona Parte* in which he stated that men make their own history.

A Charismatic leader always appears in crisis era. He represented a savior to the masses. This is very clear in the case of religious Prophets. However there are different forms of charisma. A) religious charisma such as Prophet Muhammad and Prophet Jesus. B) political charisma such as Ghandi in India, Nasir in Egypt and the Arab world and Nilson Mandela in South Africa, C) social charisma that includes Sufi *Shaikhs*, Saints and social actors. The result of the phenomenon of charisma is the transformation of the *status quo*. Charisma is the one who injects new consciousness into the masses and then is the one who leads the transformation.

Typical examples of charismatic figures that influence history are Prophet Mohamed on a world scale and the Sudanese Mohamed Ahmed Al Mahdi on a local scale. The latter led a revolutionary liberation movement against the colonial Turco-Egyptian regime in Sudan and he is the first one to establish an embryonic Sudanese state. Here the researcher is faced with the question that to what extent *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is considered as a charisma?

The discussion of charisma in history leads to the discussion of the agent-structure. For if we accept the dialectical view of the relationship between structure and agency a similarly dialectical view of the relationship between the ideational and the material almost inevitably follows. Fundamental to this particular approach to the question of structure and agency are the concepts of strategy and strategic selectivity. Actors are strategic. Moreover, structures are selective of strategy (imposing a strategic selectivity in Bob Jessop's terms) in the sense that, given a specific context, only certain courses of strategic actions are available to actors and only some of these are likely to see actors fulfill their intentions. Social, political and economic contexts are densely structured and highly contoured.<sup>79</sup>

Weber argued that charisma is a radical threat to all traditionally legitimated social structures, since charisma claims a new form of authority and values. In fact,

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<sup>78</sup> Richard H. Dekmejian and Margret J. Wyszomirski, "Charismatic Leadership in Islam: The Mahdi of the Sudan", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 4, no. 2, March 1972, pp.194-195

<sup>79</sup> Colin Hay, *op.cit.*, p.209.

Weber went so far to say that in pre-rationalist societies, 'charisma is the greatest evolutionary force'.<sup>80</sup>

#### 1.4.6 Sufi Studies

Sufism is a very personal experience through which a human being enters a process of being nearer to God. Although Sufism in itself is a personal experience, yet the Sufists are part and parcel of the whole society. In that level they constitute a social phenomenon. Sufism, Islamic mysticism, has attracted a good deal of scholarly interest on the part of Western students of Islam, and consequently a considerable number of books on this subject, both general surveys and monographic studies are available.<sup>81</sup> Recently, there is special attention for Sufi studies throughout the world. Systematic studies of Sufi orders throughout the world is taking place specially in the area of Eastern Africa and Asia. Since 1990s appeared new studies on the Idrisi and the Qadiri Sufi traditions in Somalia and the Sammaniyya in Indonesia.

Studying Sufism started with the wave of Orientalists studies of the East. Here we can find the early studies of Gibb and Massignon of Al Hallaj and early Sufi personalities. Though these early studies stood within the framework of Orientalism, however, they provided researchers with ample information on the nature of Sufism. Most of them held the point that the essential ideas of Islamic mysticism had originated from alien, non-Islamic sources. Admittedly, Sufism absorbed a considerable number of heterogeneous elements; the influence of Neoplatonism on early Sufism was especially significant. It should be recognized, however, that the primary sources of Sufism are Islamic, the Quran being first and foremost among them.<sup>82</sup>

Current Sufi studies could be classified into three main approaches: The Orientalist approach which concentrates on similarities and differences with the Western culture and Christianity. The Marxist approach which sees in Sufism reflections of the mode of productions and social formations that closely connected with feudalism and Asiatic Mode of Production. The third approach which studies Sufi *tariqas* within the boundary of neo-Sufism and with studying the texts e.g. O'Fahey and Knud Viktor. A fourth Sudanese School which is a combination of the second and third approaches tries to understand Sufism within Sudanese realities such as Karrar, Al-Karsani and Salim.

Special attention was paid to the Sufi orders appeared in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is stated that during the thirteen century, pre-existing views of the Prophet Muhammad were developed and formalized by the greatest of all Sunni Sufi theorists, Muhyi al-Din ibn al-'Arabi (1165-1240). For Ibn al-'Arabi, the Prophet was the one and only complete (that is perfect) man, *al-insan al-Kamil*, in whom were actualized all of God's attributes. Ibn al-'Arabi argued that the *haqiqa Muhammadiyya*, the essential reality of the Prophet, existed through all eternity. The Prophet thus became, in the words of Valeri Hoffman, "the perfect link between God and humanity", as, in the words of Ibn al-'Arabi:

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<sup>80</sup> Turner, *Weber and Islam*, op.cit, p.79

<sup>81</sup> Menahem Milson, *A Sufi Rule for Novices: Kitab Adab al-Muridin*, Harvard University Press, London, 1975, p.1.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

“No matter how much the Real [God] discloses himself to you in the mirror of your heart, your heart will only show you what is according to its own [defective] constitution...The manifestation of the Real in the mirror of Muhammad is the most perfect, most balanced, and most beautiful manifestation, because of his mirror’s particular qualities [of perfections]. When you perceive Him in the mirror of Muhammad, you will have perceived from Him a perfection that you could not perceive by looking at your own mirror”<sup>83</sup>.

A Sufi who is practicing specific litanies and spiritual exercises is led to a specific approach towards understanding religion in particular and the world in general. This approach leads the Sufi into a whole philosophy of life. The summary of this philosophy is that the Sufi by keeping his litanies and spiritual exercises enters into a path (*tariqa*) which entails a certain way of life. This path leads the Sufi to reach the Absolute Truth, which is God. It is claimed that the realities of this path cannot be known unless one is involved in this experience. From here, it is clear that Sufism as such is a highly personal experience. Moreover, it has an abstract level. This abstraction includes intangible and tangible dimensions. The intangible dimension is represented in the man-God relationship.<sup>84</sup> The full range of Sufism throughout the centuries is summed up in the following Prophetic tradition:

“My slave ceaseth not to draw nigh unto Me with devotions of his free will, until I love him, and when I love him, I am the Hearing wherewith he hearth, and the Sight wherewith he seeth and the hand wherewith he smiteth and the foot whereon he walketh” (Bukhari Book of Prophetic Traditions).

This process entails a continuous upgrading along the “path”. The tangible dimension is man-man relationship. This is shown in the relationship of a Sufi with other human beings i.e. with the wider community. In this respect, history of Sufism is divided into two main eras:

The first era was characterized by an individual austerity (*zuhd*) and private knowledge. This era is represented by Hudhayfa b. Al-Yaman, Al-Hassan al-Basri and Rabia’ Al-Adawiyya. They claimed that Sufi knowledge is given to them directly by the Prophet. Tor Andre clarifies this in the following statement:

“The stricter group, who championed the older ascetic pietistic order in opposition to a growing worldliness, were apparently the rightful heirs of the inner circle of the companions of the Prophet. The piety which characterized the sincere believers of

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<sup>83</sup> Quoted in Sedwick, op.cit., p. 29.

<sup>84</sup> Quoted in Amani Mohamed El Obeid, “The Sammaniyya *Tariqa* in The Sudan: Doctrine and Politics”, unpublished M.Sc. dissertation in Political Science, University of Khartoum, July 1997, pp.25-26

the first generation is certainly derived from the basic religious attitude of the Prophet himself".<sup>85</sup>

The second era is more of a religious activity. In this stage, Sufism has been developed into a coherent philosophy. This development of Sufist philosophy could only be understood as a result of the failure of Islamic community after the death of Prophet Muhammad: firstly, to activate the Islamic notion that "In Islam, there is no differentiation between nationalities except on piety". The Islamic community failed to establish a formula to achieve social equity and equality between the different nationalities that adopted Islam, particularly equality between Arab Muslims and non-Arab Muslims. Secondly, was the failure of the Islamic community to establish a base for the even distribution of wealth. This led to ethnic and class-based revolutions e.g. the Black (*zanj*) revolt and the Qaramtan revolution. Thirdly, the failure of the Islamic community to establish a legal foundation for governance based on political consensus.<sup>86</sup>

Therefore, Sufism in its second stage, was motivated by consciousness to transcend religious differences, ethnic and class loyalties. It was diverted towards the human dimension of the Islamic religion. Consequently, the most influential Sufis are either of non-Arab origins such as Ibn 'Arabi or from the poor Arab classes such as Rab'ia Al-Adawiyya, who were subjugated by the ruling Arab element represented by the Quraysh tribe aristocracy. In this context Sufism was derived from its purely Arab origin to represent the multiplicity and richness of Islam at large.<sup>87</sup>

It is stated that there are two characteristics of Sufism which made it possible for its adherents to avoid schism between themselves and non-mystical traditional Islam and to attract a large following. The first one is Sufi insistence on the observance of the law: no one could aspire to attain the *haqiqa* who did not observe the *Shari'a*, and no Sufi, no matter how elevated his spiritual station, could be exempted from the obligation of the *Shari'a*. Another characteristic is the abstruse (mysterious), esoteric nature of the Sufi sayings. Couched in a vocabulary derived from the Qu'ran and other traditional sources, Sufi pronouncements could be interpreted at different levels. The mystical doctrine was to be taught only to the initiate and only according to the degree of his preparedness; it was not to be divulged to the vulgar.<sup>88</sup>

These Sufi orders were classified as Neo-Sufism. The *tariqa Muhammadiyya* movement started in the mid-eighteenth centuries, though it did not begin to use the term *tariqa Muhammadiyya* until some fifty years later. It consisted of four very loosely connected major *tariqas*, and was probably a movement only in the most general sense. The Idrisi *tariqas* proceeding from the teachings of Ahmad Ibn Idris in the nineteenth century were the last new instance of the movement, having been preceded by the Sammaniyya, Tijaniyya and Muhammadiyya Naqshbandiyya. All of these *tariqas* incorporated different degrees of the following characters: a) spiritual union with the Prophet b) a preference for primary sources over the *Madhhab* and c) a preference for a

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<sup>85</sup> Quoted in John O. Voll, "The Khatmiyya Tariqa in the Suda", Ph.D dissertation, Harvard University, 1969, p.54.

<sup>86</sup> Abd Al Salam Nur Al Din, *Al-'Aql wa Al-Hadara*, Beirut, 1987, pp.18-19.

<sup>87</sup> Amani M. El Obied, op.cit, p.27.

<sup>88</sup> Menahem Milson, op.cit, p.7.

single *tariqa* over multiple *tariqas*.<sup>89</sup> The concept of “neo-Sufism” is adopted by O’Fahey, Vikor and Karrar in the 1990s, as an analytical concept to the politically active *turuq*. This concept of “neo-Sufism” is very clear in the study of Ahmad ibn Idris. It is important to mention some aspects of the revivalist spirit that could be expressed in the thoughts of Ahmad ibn Idris (d.1837), whose concern was not confined to teaching *awrad* (litanies), to urge people to enter retreats and isolate themselves from mankind. Ahmad ibn Idris (who taught and influenced the leaders of most activist Sufi orders in the nineteenth century Africa), think that such practices might be an advantage for the personal development of individual disciples, but are not suitable for the higher purpose at which he was aiming i.e. the unity of the world of Muslims and their unification in the world of Islam.<sup>90</sup>

It is concluded that this relation between neo-Sufism and the search for a more observance of *haqiqa* and *Shari’a* in the practice represents a principal factor that made some sections of urban literate population join Sufism in its new version.

#### 1.4.7 Conceptual interpretation of Sufism

In studying Sufism, it is inevitable to use sources written by Orientalists. For the reasons they were the first to compile, classify and describe what Sufism is. However, the writer is not underestimating the short-comings of these sources in terms of their analytical value. One of the short-comings of these sources is that they ascribe European (neoplatonism) origin to the phenomenon of Sufism. Moreover, they do not assign the Sufi phenomenon to the socio-economic set up where Sufism is found.

According to this approach, Sufism, the religious philosophy of Islam, is described in the oldest extant definition as ‘the apprehension of divine realities’, and Mohammedan mystics are fond of calling themselves *Ahl al-Haqq*, ‘the followers of the Real’.<sup>91</sup> The word ‘mystic’, which has passed from Greek into European literature, is represented in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, the three chief languages of Islam, by ‘Sufi’.<sup>92</sup> Noldeke, in an article written in 1900, showed conclusively that the name was derived from *Suf* (wool), and was originally applied to those Muslim ascetics who, in imitation of Christian hermits, clad themselves in coarse woolen garb as a sign of penitence and renunciation of worldly vanities.<sup>93</sup>

Weber treated Sufism as a basically mass religiosity which satisfied the emotional needs of Islam’s conquered subjects through their pristine and indigenous beliefs, rites and symbols. In particular the dervish orders inherited Indian and Persian organization and contemplative religiosity. Sufism, in its various forms, diluted the strict ethical monotheism of Islamic orthodoxy and robbed Islam of its potential asceticism. He went further to state that, the asceticism of the dervishes is not, like that of ascetic Protestants, a religious ethic of action, for the religious actions of the dervishes have

<sup>89</sup> Marck J. Sedgwich, *Saints and Sons: The Making and Remaking of the Rashidi Ahmadi Sufi Orders, 1799-2000*, Brill, Leiden, 2005, p.27.

<sup>90</sup> R.S. O’Fahey, *The Enigmatic Saint: Ahmad Ibn Idris and the Idrisi Tradition*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Illinois, 1990, p.7

<sup>91</sup> Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, Islamic Book Service, Lahore, Pakistan, 1997, p.1.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, p.3.

<sup>93</sup> Quoted in Ibid., p.4.

very little relationship to their secular occupations and in their scheme secular vocations have at best a purely external relationship to their planned procedure of salvation.<sup>94</sup>

It could be concluded that Sufism is originally an Islamic phenomenon but later influenced by different non-Islamic cultures. The origin of Sufism is the man-God relationship which considers humanity at large. The Prophet is the focus of a Sufi. The Prophet represents a model that Sufis follow. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai represents this glorification of the Prophet among neo-Sufis.

### 1.5 Sufism in Sudan: Popular Islam in Sudan

Popular Islam in Sudan is represented by the Qadiriyya *tariqa*. The Qadiriyya was the most prevailing *tariqa* during the Funj *Sultanate*. The Qadiriyya *tariqa* is interested in the personal relations between the disciple and God and concentrated on the esoteric sciences rather than *Shari'a*. The Qadiriyya *tariqa* is interested in the practical behaviour of the disciple that made it easy for non-Muslims to join. The Qadiriyya *tariqa* in the Funj era was characterized by giving legitimacy to many pre-Islamic practices. The Sufi *turuq* with their readiness to compromise with old religious beliefs and customs were able to admit many pagans into Islam. This readiness to compromise non-Islamic beliefs, comes from the essence of Sufism which entails the personification of the relationship between men and God and therefore entails particularly with no rigid *Shari'a* obligatory duties. The process of interaction of the Sufi *turuq* with the masses, resulted in the paganization and Africanization of those *turuq*. The Qadiriyya is characterized with looseness organization that favoured the development of numerous sub-orders, some of which have grown into independent organizations. Most of these new centers of the Qadiriyya dominating certain tribe.<sup>95</sup> The gradual disintegration of the authority of Sinnar led to more involvement of Sufi *Shaikhs* in politics. Therefore the Qadiriyya *Shaikhs* during the Funj era found the first relationship between religion and politics in Sudanese history.

Decentralized as it is, the Qadiriyya *tariqa* constituted a single platform for its adherents in the funj era. Every *Shaikh* had his followers and disciples seek to be initiated in order to start their own sub-sections of the *tariqa*.

#### 1.5.1 The Centralized *Turuq*

The most important characteristic of these Sufi *Turuq* is the Sufi-Scholar "orthodox" compromise. Also they are influenced by Hijaz. Most of these Sufi orders are originated from Hijaz and they are scholars in *Shari'a* sciences such as *Tafsyr*, *Figh* (jurisprudence) and *Hadith* (Prophetic tradition). This is beside their knowledge of Sufi Sciences.

Some authors classify these centralized *turuq* as neo-Sufi orders. The first to apply the concept of neo-Sufism was Fazlur Rahman who uses it to describe a tendency towards reform under pressure from the orthodox.<sup>96</sup> What is distinctive about the 18<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Turner, Weber and Islam, op.cit., p.140.

<sup>95</sup> Amani M. El Obeid, op.cit., pp.69-70.

<sup>96</sup> R.S O'Fahey and Bernd Radtke, "Neo-Sufism Reconsidered", Bergen University, p. 55

century neo-Sufi brotherhoods is their outward-looking reformist orientation contrasted with the older quietist mystical tradition.

The general characteristics of these centralized Sufi *turuq* are the following:

- 1) Rejection of “popular” estatic Sufi practice e.g. dancing, the ‘noisy’ *dhikr*, saint worship and the visiting of saints’s tombs.
- 2) Rejection of Ibn ‘Arabi’s teachings, especially his doctrine of *Wahdat al Wujud*.
- 3) Emphasis on moral and social teachings.
- 4) “Union” with the spirit of the Prophet, with a general emphasis on “The Muhammadan way or *tariqa Muhammadiyya*”.
- 5) Legitimation of the position of the order’s founder through his having received prayers, litanies and his authority generally directly from the Prophet.
- 6) Creation of mass organizations hierarchically structured under the authority of the founder and sometimes his family.
- 7) Renewed emphasis on *Hadith* studies.
- 8) Rejection of *taqlid*, and the assertion of the right to exercise *ijtihad*.
- 9) The will to take political and sometimes militant measures in defense of Islam.<sup>97</sup>

The founders of such *tariqas* in Sudan are either Sudanese who studied in Hijaz and got authenticity there such as Ahmad Al Tayyib Al Bashir founder of the Sammaniyya order in Sudan and Al Majdhub of the Majdhubiyya order or from Hijazi origin such as Muhamad ‘Uthman Al Mirghani who descends from a Hijazi family and they still have strong ties with Hijaz. All of these founders are considered to be scholars. Coming to Sudan, these Sufi *turuq* have been subjected to a process of localization. In other words in order to find ground in Sudanese masses they had to adapt to the prevailing figure of Sufi *Shaikh* as *Wali* (saint) who is able to perform *karamat* (miracles doing).

After departed from Hijaz in 1178/1764-5, with the permission of Al Samman to initiate people in the Sammaniyya *tariqa* in his home land, Ahmad Al Tayyib Al Bashir became responsible for the localization and modification of the Sammaniyya *tariqa* to fit the Sudanese society. Both Ahmad Al Tayyib Al Bashir founder of the Sammaniyya *tariqa* in Sudan and Sayyid Al Hassan Al Mirghani in Kassala could not escape the figure of a *Wali*.

Also what is significant of these centralized *turuq* is their involvement in politics through social reform, in other words social reform is the motivation of politics.

## 1.6 Difficulty of Studying The Phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur’ai*

Studying the phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur’ai* in Sudan is faced with some difficulties such as: i) inadequate documentation of the Sammaniyya in the Kiraida in the White Nile where *Shaikh Waqi Allah*, the father of Al Bur’ai got his Sufi initiation. *Shaikh Waqi Allah* is the Sufi master of *Shaikh Abdel Rahim Al Bur’ai* ii) inadequate studies of Kordofan Province, where the Zariba, centre of *Shaikh Al Bur’ai* lies. iii) inadequate studies of the transformation in the Sudan during the period of 1990-2004.

Other difficulties of studying *Shaikh* could be summarized as: a) different perceptions of *Shaikh Al Bur’ai*, b) allegiance of various social forces and groups that are linked to *Shaikh Al Bur’ai*, c) difficulty in grasping rural-urban dichotomy in the

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p.57.

development of the phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, d) difficulty of periodization i.e. lack of information showing the different historical stages of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*.

Another important aspect of the difficulty of studying the phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is the difficulty of finding information regarding the financial affairs of the centers of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. Being huge economic enterprise to the extent of being a quazi-State institution in Kordofan, the researcher found it is difficult to get any information except general information of being big land owner who own huge cultivable lands, collector of sesame product and distributor of sesame oil in the other Sudanese states. Other information concerning the organizational and financial affairs were difficult to obtain.

For all these reasons, the researcher depends on oral tradition and archival work in order to overcome scarcity of informations. In the next chapters a detailed study of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* that will be based on interviews and primary data will be presented.

The popularity of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is centred on his *baraka*. It is found that among the Murdiyya of Senegal, for example, *baraka* is essential to the instrumentalities of power, production and exchange. On the other hand, blessing is the refuge of those whose lives are most instructed, or destructured, in terms of immediate experience (however determined they may be by wider forces in the society). It can be the language of domination or of the dominated, but in completely contrasted forms and with very different significance.<sup>98</sup>

Many stories of *karama* (miracles) are told of great *Shaikhs*. These stories serve an inspirational purpose, but also confirm the legitimacy of the position of the *Shaikh* in question. The *Wali* (saint) is a spiritual rank, not to be confused with the function of *Shaikh*. Not all *Walis* are *Shaikhs*, and not all *Shaikhs* are *walis*, though perhaps most are considered to be *Walis* by their followers.<sup>99</sup> A *Wali* has *baraka*, a term which cannot be exactly translated into European languages, but which lies close to grace or blessing, a variety of spiritual power. *Baraka* can hardly be felt, but feeds and protects those who receive it; it is a concept present throughout Islam, but particularly important for Sufis. It is significant to mention that *Baraka*, for Sufis, is present in a *Wali* even after his death, and a visit to the tomb of a *Wali* may produce *baraka* in the same way as a visit to a living *Wali*.<sup>100</sup>

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai*'s popularity is built within the echelons of Sufism. Love of the *Shaikh* is coupled with obedience to an imitation of the *Shaikh*, both of which are made easier by love. Obedience to another is a necessity when following a spiritual guide, but is also useful in itself: the *nafs* likes to obey no one, and so the habit of obedience to another is an effective subdue of the *nafs*. Therefore, the imitation of the *Shaikh* has obvious benefits. As has been said, the *Shaikh* is himself following the *sunna* of the Prophet and imitating the Prophet, and so he who imitates the *Shaikh* is thus imitating the Prophet, but with a nearer, more visible model. Imitation of the Prophet is compliance with the will of God, and the sequence *Shaikh-Prophet-God* is found not only in imitation, but also in love. In loving his *Shaikh*, a Sufi is ultimately loving God.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Micheal Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam: Religion and Society in the Modern Middle East*, I. B. Tauris, 1992, p.115

<sup>99</sup> Mark J. Sedgwick, op.cit, pp.31-32.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, pp.36-37.



Most of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai's* disciples are not necessary confined to the *Sammaniyya tariqa*. They are from other Sufi *tariqas*, and some are not recruited into any Sufi *tariqa*. The disciples of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* outside his traditional strong hold Kordofan are larger than those in Kordofan. His disciples are the largest of any Sufi *tariqa*.<sup>102</sup>

### 1.7 Rural-Urban Dichotomy of the Phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*

What is interesting in the case of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is that he revived religiosity of Sufism among the educated group by reviving Sudanese rural values. Even after coming to Khartoum, he kept a very strong hold in Kordofan. In Khartoum he brought with him rural values and even the colloquial language used in Kordofan. There are values of solidarity in Al Zariba that overcomes tribal boundaries. This point will be discussed in the following chapters.

This fact of reviving Sufism within rural values raises the question that why orthodox religiosity or official Islam represented by the media and the Islamic universities are unable to attract the attention of the masses? Could this revival of Sufism within rural values in Khartoum and other major cities in Sudan is a reaction to the official Islam imposed in the media? Could it be the process of modernization since 1940s that created a crisis in social cohesion was behind this revival of rural Sufism in Sudan? Could it be a sort of rejection of political Islam imposed by a coercive state?

Here the phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* and the introduction of rural values into urban settings represent a challenge to social theorization, represented by Gellner that dominated in the early 1970s. Gellner's *Saints of The Atalas* distinguishes two distinct types of Moroccan religion. The type he calls "Urban religion" is seen to stress: i) Scripture and literacy, ii) Puritanism and the absence of graven images, iii) Strict monotheism, iv) Minimalization of hierarchy and spiritual equality, v) Abstention from ritual excess, vi) A tendency toward moderation and sobriety, vii) A stress on rules rather than emotions. Rural religion on the other hand, is seen to stress: personalization of religion and anthropolatry, ii) Proliferation of images and symbols of the sacred, iv) Religious pluralism, v) local incarnation of the sacred, vi) Hierarchy and mediation. Gellners summarizes his model of the social aspect of religion as by saying: "The town constitutes a society which needs and produces a doctor, while the tribe needs and produces the saint."<sup>103</sup> The phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* quickly reveals the inaccuracies of theorization of Gellener which dominates the field of Sufi Studies in the 1970s. Here there is a completely new phenomenon that exists in other parts of the Islamic countries and Sudan is part of it.

### 1.8 The Concept of Crisis

Although crises are common, little is known about how a situation becomes defined as a crisis. Theoretical and empirical analyses of the response to and management

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<sup>102</sup> Abdel Latif El Boni & Abdel Latif Saied, *Al Burai A Man of Time: Social Study in the Path of Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, Gaf for Arts and Media production, September 2000, p.13 ( in Arabic).

<sup>103</sup> Vincent J. Cornel, "The Logic of Analogy and The Role of the Sufi *Shaikh* in Post-Marinid Morocco", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 15, No.1, February 1983, p.68.

of crises have been conducted without complete theoretical development of the concept of crises or of the process of perceiving crises.<sup>104</sup> Crisis has become an all-pervasive rhetorical metaphor that its analytical utility for contemporary social thought has become devalued and confused.<sup>105</sup> One of the advantages of the notion of crisis is that it helps to conceptualize social change as discontinuous process in both time and space. Change is far from being smooth and gradual and cumulative. It is also expressed through dislocating and de-stabilizing moments of transition. This framework helps in turn to capture the sense of change as open-ended, not the pre-determined result of an evolutionary master-plan, but rather a process mediated through cultural agency and conflict.<sup>106</sup>

According to Holton, the classical and highly influential Marxist theory of crisis was founded on the structural contradictions of economic life, manifest in processes like the falling rate of profit. Although Marxism also claims that structural crises or 'contradictions' in the mode of production at some state tend to become manifest in class consciousness and class struggle, it was already clear to late nineteenth-century observers that no automatic connection of this kind could be sustained. Revolutions did not automatically accompany crises. From this viewpoint came a sense of divergence between the 'objective' character of crisis and 'subjective' or 'cultural' failure to perceive crisis. This kind of divergence produced notions such as 'false consciousness' which were both critical of and often disdainful towards what might be called cultural normality. In this idiom, diagnosis of crisis and the prescription of therapy is a matter for experts, theorists and the like. In the more recent crises theories of Jurgen Habermas by contrast, it is a central axiom that 'only subjects can be involved in crisis. This only when members of a society experience structural alterations as critical for continued existence and feel their social identity threatened can we speak of crisis.'<sup>107</sup>

The phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* coincided with the retreat of secular forces and intelligentsia in the Sudanese society. Gabriel Warburg has expressed this implicitly in his statement that:

Two major problems will however continue to beset the Sudan in the foreseeable future, its economic weakness and its geo-political position. Since 1971 Nueri has made a major effort in order to attract Western capital to the Sudan. This policy is beginning to bear fruit and may lead to strong economic and political ties between the Sudan, Western Europe and the United States. In due course this may enable the Sudanese Communist Party to regain some of its influence both within the new industrial workers and the modernized section of Sudanese farmers. Furthermore, the rapidly growing intelligentsia which under military rule has practically no political power, might seek

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<sup>104</sup> Robert S. Billings, Thomas W. Milburn, Mary Lou Schaalman, "A Model of Crisis Perception: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No.2, June 1980, p.300.

<sup>105</sup> R.J. Holton, "The Idea of Crisis in Modern Society", *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol.38, No.4, December 1987, p.502.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p.505.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.505-506.

communist support in order to further its political aims. In conclusion, the prospects of communism in Sudan do not seem too bright. It appears that at the very best the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP) may hope to regain its previous strength.<sup>108</sup>

The above mentioned statement could be generalized that the Sudanese intelligentsia is losing its grounds.

### 1.9 The Concept of The Middle Class: Criteria of Definition

It is argued that the concept of the “middle class” is one of the most enigmatic yet frequent in social sciences. The definition of the middle class represents a big debate in social sciences. According to Peter Stearns, the word (middle class) connote: the triumphant industrialist, with his satellite professionals as allies, ultimately forming a new ruling class revolutionary when needed but prone to a quick return to the policies of order and not revolutionary at all when aristocratic or Tory foes had been disposed of. Peter Stearns went further to clarify that, it a class imbued with strong cultural values which conveyed a personalized amalgam of Enlightenment-cum-Calvinist ideals and changed the mentality of society through “social control” well beyond the class itself.<sup>109</sup>

Among the Marxists the class position of salaried mental workers (i.e. intellectuals) has been an issue of controversy for nearly a century.<sup>110</sup> The most common reading of Marx attributes to him a simplistic theory of class polarization in which the disappearance of the old middle class (the petty bourgeoisie) prepares the way for a direct and final confrontation between the two remaining classes: the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. According to this interpretation, Marx totally ignored the emergence of a salaried or new middle class.<sup>111</sup> The specific passage that seems to provide the strongest support for this view of the decline of petty bourgeois comes where Marx and Engles describe the decline of the petty bourgeoisie in the Communist Manifesto:

“The previously existing small intermediate strata- the small industrials, merchants and renteres, the artisans and peasants-all these classes sink down into the proletariat, partly because their small capital does not suffice for the carrying on of large-scale industry and succumbs in competition with the larger capitalists, partly because their skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production. Thus the proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population.”<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Gabriel Warburg, Islam, Nationalism and Communism in a Traditional Society: The Case of Sudan, Frank Cass, 1978, p.167.

<sup>109</sup> Peter N. Stearns, “The Middle Class: Towards a Precise Definition”, Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol.21, No.3, July 1979, p.377.

<sup>110</sup> Val Burris, “The Discovery of The New Middle Class”, Theory and Society, Vol.15, No. 3, May 1986, p.317.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, p.320

<sup>112</sup> Cited in Ibid., p.320.

According to Val, the historical growth of these salaried intermediaries discussed at greater length in Marx's later writings, leading some to argue that Marx was actually an advocate, if not the originator of the concept of a "New Middle class". This interpretation while closer to the truth, is also something of an over simplification. Admittedly, there are passages in which Marx used the term "class" or "middle class" when speaking of salaried intermediate groups.<sup>113</sup>

Within the Marxist theory, the middle class is dismissed in favor of a two-level hierarchy, them and us or admits the middle class but assume its actual or future assimilation to them or us and therefore pay little attention to it on detail. Within class conflict approach, it allows a host of groupings and can be sensitive to the middle class, as intermediate wealth-holders (by the early industrial revolution or, in some views, before) and political aspirants, fighting often a two front war between aristocracy on the one hand, whose position is sought; and lower class on the other, against whom positions must be defended. A classic revolutionary grouping through 1848, the middle class can be redefined in contemporary terms, as intermediates in bureaucratic power brokerage, with equal effect.<sup>114</sup>

The middle class can be seen to figure prominently in all three major uses of stratification groupings. These are relations to power sources, economic, political and cultural and self-consciousness. Yet to anticipate, identification of the class with the social elite is risky for most historical situations. The middle class may be supportive, may provide new blood for the rulers, but it does not merge and may rebel.<sup>115</sup> The diligent student of the 19<sup>th</sup> century French historiography will find the middle class terrified by lower-class radicalism at least thrice and pressed into a permanently defensive conservative stance. Important segments of the middle class were not elements of conflicts during important periods of industrialization.

Stearns stated that "middle class" is a clumsy term and, along with a more general desire to simplify the problem of social stratification it has led to inadequate sets of definitional criteria-inadequate for all three of the approaches outlined above, though especially for the third, the temptation is to find some single means of coming out the social middle. Income plus property are the point of departure, reasonably enough, but too often the point of terminus.<sup>116</sup> The rise of managers, technicians and employees, often invoked, needs considerable study still, particularly outside the state bureaucracy, to define both continuities and differentiations within the middle class. But a focus on middle power instead of middling wealth would still involve only a single criterion.<sup>117</sup> As propertyless employees they experience conditions of economic dependency not unlike those confronting the working class.

The middle class is very important in the national life of the less developed countries. Most students and observers of Latin America agree that a middle class has come into being in many Latin American nations, and now has an important voice in national life. This middle class is composed of government employees, small businessmen, commercial employees, teachers, professionals, officers in the military

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid, p. 321.

<sup>114</sup> Peter N. Stearns, op.cit, p.281.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p.382.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, pp283-384.

service, university students and others who have a “middle income” status between the rich and the very poor.<sup>118</sup>

The nature of the middle class in less developed countries is centered on dualism. A class eager to transformation and at the same time its material base which is connected to the state, made it eager in stability (tend not to be militant). Faced with a national crisis or the threat of rapid change, the Latin American middle class for example, ultimately acquiesces, it remains passive before a military regime that guarantees stability, or it actively supports a political party or a coalition of parties aimed at the status quo.<sup>119</sup> The Brazilian middle class believes in change but also wants stability in order to consolidate and continue its own favored but difficult position in Brazilian society. It allowed military to take over the government with little, if any protest in hope of stability.<sup>120</sup> This paradox comes out of the nature of the middle class. In his analysis of Cross-National Data, Nordlinger has provided us with most persuasive results demonstrating that the officers’ middle-class identities detract from their government responsiveness: “Thus by birth and achievement they have learned to place a high value on the preservation and development of the economic and political requisites of their class: they are far less responsive to the aspirations of lower classes and quite unresponsive to peasant and working-class aspirations.”<sup>121</sup>

In answering the question why the educated are the dominant section of the middle class in Sudan and other developing countries, it is clear that the educated strata is the strata that have knowledge and know how that enabled it in playing major role in the process of decolonization. Because of that role in early 1950s they were distinguished. However they were subjected to a process of degradation and disintegration because of political reasons that is the appearance of strong bureaucratic bourgeoisie which became more influential in decision-making and because of actors of coup d’etat that brought the military to the top of decision-making. The result is that politically the educated group became lagged behind. It is significant to mention that the middle class is not a dominant class. It is highly mobile class as new actors come into the political and economic scene and older actors get out of it.

It is clear that the Sudanese middle class lie within the above generalization of the middle class in the developing countries. In 1950s it was the main political actors in the process of decolonization. However after 1969 it was undermined by the new bureaucratic bourgeoisie that appeared with advent of May regime. In 1989 the latest coup d’etat brought military to the top of decision-making and further the material base of the educated strata was disintegrated by the new liberalization policies.

### **1.10 The Study Approach**

The researcher intends to use the Weberian approach in studying the role played by religious charisma but to study them within the socio-economic context which is

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<sup>118</sup> Charles Wagley, “The Dilemma of The Latin American Middle Class”, Proceedings of The Academy of Political Science, Vol.4, Economic and Political Trends in Latin America, May 1946, p.2.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p.7.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p.9

<sup>121</sup> Amos Perlmutter, “The Myth of The New Middle Class: Some Lessons in Social and Political Theory”, Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol.12, No.1, January 1970, p.21

emphasized by Marxism. Therefore the researcher is making some sort of combination between the two approaches. Here the researcher is influenced by the Sudanese school of studying Sufism of Karrar, Al Karsani and Salim which entails differentiation between Islam as theology and Islam as a practical experience. Also it entails studying the processes through which the local elements have tried to combat the new external developments along two parallel lines: the pre-Islamic traditions which were mainly animistic and paganistic that represent popular Sufism with the new scholarly Islamic religion which rejects much of the local heritage. According to this school using unilateral approach to study such Sufi phenomenon is very difficult, if not impossible to give a holistic view. Therefore, in studying Sufism it is necessary to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach which indicates using different disciplines to study the phenomenon so as to develop a holistic view.

### 1.11 Organization of The Research

This dissertation includes six chapters that deal with different aspects of the phenomenon of the middle class and Sufism in Sudan with emphasis on the center of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* in Kordofan.

The first chapter discusses new challenges met by Social Sciences in studying Muslim societies. It discusses challenges faced by social sciences in studying Islamic revival in general and Sufi revival among sectors used to be secular in particular. It includes discussion of globalization as a new phenomenon that affects Muslim societies. Also it discusses the paradox between the text and reality in studying Muslim societies. The first chapter also includes the main hypothesis of the research which is centered on answering two focal questions. 1) Why *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* has been transformed from an individual *faki* in North Kordofan region into a national figure? 2) Why the middle class has been disintegrated and its secular ideology has been decomposed and being re-organized itself on religious ideation? To What extent *Shaikh Al-Burai's* phenomenon represents solution to the crisis of the middle class? This chapter reviews the different theoretical approaches in studying the religious phenomenon. It reviews the works of Weber's whose work on Islam was not completed. However, what Weber conceived of Islam and Islamic societies represents an appreciated attempt that any researcher can not do without. The researcher concentrated on the writings of Brayn Turner on Weber works. The researcher reached the conclusion that Weber and Marx when studied the Islamic societies reached almost similar conclusions. This is represented by the Asiatic mode of production in the works of Marx and the Patrimonial domination. Both thinkers agree that Islamic societies are exceptions to historical development in Europe.

The second chapter discusses the phenomenon of the transformation of the urban middle class into Sufism in many Islamic countries other than Sudan. It also discusses the notion of sociology that Sufi orders are disappearing phenomenon as a result of modernization. A more judicious and better informed argument concerning the apparent decline of Sufi orders is that given by Micheal Gilsenan, who in the 1960s studied an Egyptian urban Sufi order. The various social, economic and educational functions that the orders had served in the past, Gilsenan argues, are presently better served by the specialized modern institutions of trade unions, political associations, schools, etc. This functionalist argument of course leaves open the possibility that certain

orders may find new functions and grow rather than decline. The chapter shows that the appearance of Sufi orders in urban setting represents a real challenge to classical sociologists theories. This chapter also discusses the phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. The chapter shows that the most important factor in the development of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* into popular figure in addition to his *Madih* is the reputation of him as *karama* maker and one who possesses *baraka*. The concept of *karama* or blessing is very linked to times of crisis. When societies witnessed different types of crisis, there appear the search for a saint or one who possess blessing in order to play the role of savior. This chapter shows that *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* represents a phenomenon of an individual *faki* (holymen) who was transformed into charismatic or national figure as a result of the Sudan's political and economic crisis.

The chapter also shows the importance of Kordofan in the formation of the phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. It is found that the state, the tribe and the *tariqa* are the three main institutions that influenced the development of the region of Kordofan. The chapter shows that in studying the phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, any researcher has to study two component pillars in this study: tribalism and Sufism, especially in Kordofan where a transitional society is in a process of transformation from tribalism into class society within a nation-state. Due to the introduction of capitalist relations in Kordofan and the growing of commerce, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* got to have his links in the center of Sudan through his businessmen disciples. Large numbers of the disciples of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* are merchants who seek his blessings to their commercial activities. These relations facilitated the transformation of *Al Bur'ai* into an economic enterprise that works as a quazi-State in Kordofan providing basic services to the local population due to the retreat of the state in such fields.

The third chapter discusses the transformation of large section of the educated middle class into Sufism. The chapter shows that there is difficulty in making a static definition of the Sudanese middle class. It also shows that the middle class in Sudan is facing a severe crisis of identity. This identity crisis led factions of the middle class to adopt Islam with a Sufi version. The identity crisis is caused by the fact that the educated Sudanese of the middle class in its beginnings in 1940s and 1950s, suffered a paradoxical situation of being part and parcel of colonialism and at the same time it is the class that have to take the burden of de-colonization. This chapter shows that in the 1970s due the appearance of new bureaucratic bourgeoisie under military rulers, the middle class was marginalized politically and its economic base was disintegrated and led to its impoverishment. The chapter also shows the fact that educated individual *fakis* become part and parcel of the neo-Sufi movements in Sudan.

It also discusses how the macro-economic policies adopted since late 1970s and which applied the measures of the IMF and IBRD led to the impoverishment of the Sudanese middle class. Yet the liberalization process and de-subsidization of the health and education sectors in addition to political lays offs for public goods led to the disintegration of the Sudanese middle class. This disintegration disconnected the middle class from its western cultural ties and led it to look for new beliefs and ideation that happened to be among Sufi circles.

The fourth chapter discusses the doctrine of *Al Bur'ai*. It shows that *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* started as a Sammani individual *Shaikh* but later developed a doctrine that tried to unite the doctrines of all Sufi *tariqas* in Sudan. He became representative of all Sudanese

Sufi *tariqa*, as he used to initiate different disciples into different *tariqas*. He was able to initiate disciples into the Qadiriyya, the Tijaniyya and the Khatmiyya in addition to the Sammaniyya. The researcher in this chapter reviews the influence of the Sammaniyya *tariqa* on the Sufi doctrine of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai. The researcher found that the doctrine of the Sammaniyya *tariqa* with its emphasis on the concept of the Perfect Man and its individualist nature helped *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai in developing his own litanies that made him distinct and independent within the Sammaniyya *tariqa*. The chapter also discusses the *baraka* (blessing) and *karama* making (miracle doings) of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai and its relation to the Sufi tradition. The chapter shows that the adoption of *baraka* and *karama* by *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai who never denied them, helped him to revive popular Sufism and led him to transform into a charismatic leader, a process that has been facilitated by the crisis atmosphere dominated Sudan since 1977, the year that witnessed the application of IMF measures in Sudan.

The fifth chapter discusses the importance of poetry in the appearance of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai as unifier and revivalist of popular Sudanese Sufism. Poetry represents an efficient tool of the Sufis to express their personal experience. It also represents an efficient tool in spreading Sufi values and religious ethics. In the case of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai, poetry represented an efficient tool in social change and in uniting large sections of Sudanese. This Sufi poetry (*Madih*) of Al Bur'ai is a continuation of the phenomenon that poetry happened to be the strongest manifestation of Sufism as early as the beginnings of Sufism in Islamic history. In Sudan Sufi poetry dominated since the Funj Sultanate and it was very efficient in the dissemination of Sufi values, documenting historical events and leading the whole society for better values. The thing that led to wide spread of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai's fame is the poetry of Prophetic tradition which he used as means for Islamic missionary. In his poems you find the call to strengthen faith, to practice rituals and taking care of God in dealings and keeping family relations and relations with all people, a call to the building of the virtuous society and it presented *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai as a social reformer. The poetry calls for good relations between all people, the need to politeness and the call for sticking to the Sufi path. This poetry or *Madih* of Al Bur'ai worked as an anti-Wahabi incursion and revived popular Islamic tradition. The chapter shows that what is striking in the *Madih* of Al Bur'ai is that it dominated among the Sudanese middle class with colloquial language and not with perfect Arabic language. The chapter shows that the Sammaniyya *tariqa* is behind this *Madih* ability. The Sammanis are pioneer in the development of proper and colloquial Arabic poetry in Sudan. Poetry of Ahmad Al Tayyib Al Bashir, Abdel Mahmoud Nur Al Da'im and Hashim Abdel Mahmoud is a good example. In his *Madih* Al Bur'ai documented the *karamas* and miracles of most of the Sudanese Sufis. His use of the tone of the classical Sudanese songs in addition to optimism led to his popularity throughout the Sudan.

The sixth chapter shows the importance of analyzing the era of the *Ingazh* government in order to understand the transformation of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai into a national figure that took place during the *Ingazh* period. Also, the *Ingazh* government witnessed the peak of the disintegration of the fragile middle class as a result of reasons mentioned in chapter two in this research. The outcome of this disintegration of the middle class resulted either in Sufi ideation of this middle class or being reorganize itself in organized Islamic movement. The chapter includes the development of the relationship of the



*Ingazh* government and Sufism. The chapter also shows the development of the political life of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai. It also tried to answer the question that why the *Ingazh* government was tolerant to *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai. The chapter shows that one of the main reasons behind the tolerance of the *Ingazh* government towards *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is its lack of political legitimacy. This fact led the government to depend on the media and the small Sufi orders. The chapter analyses the impact of international politics and the encouragement of Sufism in the later stage of the *Ingazh* as means to combat militant Islam. The chapter also shows sources of power of Al Bur'ai, manifestations of his strength and his financial ability. It includes civic associations formed by Al Bur'ai as means to mobilize the newly marginalized middle class for societal uplifting. The retreat of the activities of the political parties, trade unions and actors of civil society after the military coup d'état of the *Ingazh*, paved the way for small Sufi orders to fill this gap. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai stepped in as a social reformer and builder of new Islamic Sufi society. It also includes his social role which is reflected in his mediation in conflicts. The chapter also tried to answer the question that is *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is a product of the media. This chapter shows that there is a need for a new definition of politics that is practicing politics as a result of being civil society builder. Finally the chapter shows the reasons of the withering away of the phenomenon of Al Bur'ai after Nivasha peace agreement.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Sufism: From Rural to Urban Areas**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This research intends to study the phenomenon of the transformation of members of the declining and disintegrating Sudanese middle class into Sufi organizations. The emphasis of studying this phenomenon will be the center of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* in northern Kordofan, in western Sudan.

The phenomenon of the transformation of members of the middle class into Sufism is taking place in different Islamic societies other than Sudan, such as Indonesia, Turkey and Morocco.<sup>122</sup> Martin van Bruinessen stated that, “there is an appeal of Sufism to urbanites and others at the forefront of modernizing social changes in Muslim communities across the globe. In countries such as Indonesia and Turkey, Sufism has become a conspicuous aspect of urban middle class religiosity, although in different ways. The ‘classical’ Sufi orders such as the Naqshbandiyya and the Qadiriyya, remain influential in both countries, and appear even to find new adherents in circles that previously appeared highly secularized. The writer has to review different researches in such circles.

Sufi revival is considered by some researchers as a bi-product of the general Islamic revival in Muslim countries. Martin van Bruinessen stated that:

“The Islamic resurgence, the onset of which may be traced back to the 1967 Middle East war and which has received a strong impetus from the Iranian revolution, has not only brought a wide range of Islamist and neo-fundamentalist movements into the public sphere of the Muslim world but also appears to have occasioned a revival of Sufism and related devotional movements. Contradicting the easy dichotomies of much popular writings on Islam, neither the Islamist nor the Sufi movements can be explained as traditionalist responses to modernity or to the secular modernism represented by the nationalist, socialist and populist elites of the preceding decades. Most scholars agree that Islamist ideology and Islamist movements are distinctly modern phenomenon, and that to some extent even neo-fundamentalist movements are part of, and not just a reaction to, modernity.”<sup>123</sup>

A researcher in contemporary Sufism in Indonesia stated that: “Sufism, both as a ritual activity and as a mystical path undertaken within orthodox order, clearly has a firm place in Indonesian Islam in the later part of the twentieth century. But it has done more than merely survive. Very much a contributor to the broader Islamic revival, Sufism too has undergone revitalization. As part of the broader revival, it has been subject to

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122 Martin Van Bruinessen, “Sufism and The Modern in Islam”, *ISIM Newsletter* No.13, Leiden University, December 2003, p.62.

123 Ibid.

reinterpretations that have helped break down distinctions between “Traditionalists” and “Modernists”; numerous *tariqas* have experienced new growth, and new kinds of people have joined them, including cosmopolitan urbanites; and finally Sufism has found expression through new institutional forms in urban environments.<sup>124</sup> Howell added that as with scripturalist forms of Modernism and Islamist ideologies emanating from the Near East, Sufism attracted considerable interest among students, intellectuals, and artists from the 1970s.<sup>125</sup> According to Howell, *Tasawuf* is represented as a body of Muslim knowledge that can help foster the inner life. He stated that ‘the rehabilitation of Sufism as an intellectually and doctrinally defensible form of spirituality for the “modern” Muslim, combined with the enthusiasms of the wider Islamic revival, appears to be stimulating increased participation in that classic Sufi institution, the *tariqa*’.<sup>126</sup> He concluded that Sufism, once strongly associated with the “traditional” rural sector of Indonesian society, clearly has not died out. The rural institutional bases of classical Sufism, the *tariqa*, are intact and even show signs of vigorous growth associated with adaptive changes in structure, recruitment styles and memberships. It is argued that contemporary Sufism must be studied as a complete system, not merely a degradation of another system. It developed from classical Sufism but is not identical with it, and offers a worldview and rituals that distinguish it from other Islamic currents.<sup>127</sup>

This interest is expressed through the participation of urbanites in the long-established, rural-based Sufi orders, the *tariqa*, but also through novel institutional forms in the towns and cities. Further, the intellectual basis of Sufism is being discovered by cosmopolitans, and the tradition is being sympathetically reformulated, especially by Neo-Modernist intellectuals. Sufism has contributed to the softening of contrasts in religiosity associated with Islamic Traditionalism and Modernism and therefore helped create the common ground in civil society upon which political tensions, so acute in the period since the fall of the Suharto regime, can, it is hoped, be resolved. Neo-Sufism in particular is strongly linked with Neo-Modernist liberalism, not only because it is often espoused by the same thinkers, but because Neo-Sufi practice, with its emphasis on felt connection with the Divine as a basis for ethical social prescription, strongly reinforce tolerance for religious pluralism.<sup>128</sup>

Modernity is assumed as the main factor behind the resurgence of Sufism in modern environments. According to Van Bruinessen, this resurgence of Sufism calls into question a number of widely held assumptions about the impact of modernity on Islam and Muslim societies. It had long been taken for granted that mysticism, at least as embodied in the Sufi orders, was rapidly disappearing and only retained a foothold among the most backward, often rural, segments of the population. In the classics of the mid twentieth century, A.J Arberry’s Sufism, it is remarked that Sufi orders in many places were continuing to attract the ‘ignorant masses, but no man of education would care to speak in their favor’. This perception became especially widespread due to the influential writings of Clifford Geertz and Ernest Gellner, whose most accessible essays

<sup>124</sup> Julia Day Howell, “Sufism and The Indonesian Islamic Revival”, *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol.60, No.3, August 2001, p.710.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid. p. 713.

<sup>127</sup> Valeri J.Hoffman-Ladd, “Devotion to The Prophet and His Family in Egyptian Sufism”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.24, No.4, November 1992, p.615

<sup>128</sup> Julia Howell, op.cit, p.713.

examined the apparently inevitable shift from the 'classical styles' of Islam or 'marboutism' centered around rural miracle-working saints and mystics, to the dry 'scripturalism' of urban scholars. These studies continue to exert considerable influence among social scientists studying Muslim societies in spite of the serious flaws in the argument. Geertz and Gellner declared Sufism moribund, but what they meant by Sufism was only its popular, rural ecstatic, illiterate variant. They appeared unaware of the existence, all over the Muslim world, of learned urban Sufis, whose followings included members of the traditional elites.<sup>129</sup> A more judicious and better informed argument concerning the apparent decline of Sufi orders is that given by Micheal Gilsenan, who in the 1960s studied an Egyptian urban Sufi order. The various social, economic and educational functions that the orders had served in the past, Gilsenan argues, are presently better served by the specialized modern institutions of trade unions, political associations, schools, etc. This functionalist argument of course leaves open the possibility that certain orders may find new functions and grow rather than decline. In fact, the order studied by Gilsenan had expanded where others declined, which Gilsenan attributed to a form of Weberian rationalization, the adoption of a formal structure and explicit written rules, but which a critic (De Jong, 1974) attributed to state patronage.<sup>130</sup>

Bruinessen made a connection between the worldwide wave of Sufi-led *jihad* movements against colonial powers and/or indigenous elites of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this regard, Evans-Pritchard's well-known explanation of how the Sanusi order provided an integrating structure to the fissiparous Bedouin tribes of Cyrenaica and thus played a role in Libyan nation building easily lends itself to adaptation in other segmentary societies. Sufi orders appear in these cases to adopt a new political role, as predecessors and progenitors of modern nationalist movements. Their militancy in these cases contrasts sharply with the peace loving, tolerant and inclusivistic attitudes commonly attributed to Sufism. This gave rise to the concept of 'neo-Sufism', launched by scholars (most prominently Fazlur Rahman) who felt that a number of important changes in the nature of Sufism had taken place in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. 'Neo-Sufism' was claimed to distinguish itself by increasing militancy, stronger orientation towards the *Shari'a* and rejection of *bida'*, and a shift from efforts to achieve unity with God to imitation of the Prophet.<sup>131</sup>

This revival of neo-Sufism in most Islamic countries weakened the dominant trend in sociology of Islam influenced by Gellners' characterization of Sufism in Muslim majority countries as fatally implicated in disappearing rural social formations. According to Howell, while certain *tarekat* (orders) have been able to accommodate spiritual seekers with much more diverse social attributes and now recruit through many forms of social contact other than simply shared *peasant* background, the *tarekat* have not entirely overcome their "image problems" with the secularly educated middle classes.

The revitalization of Sufism by notable Muslim intellectuals, including Modernists, has helped to create a general interest in Sufism among educated urbanites, but social impediments remain. For one thing, there is a common set of prejudices against, according to which they are authoritarian and secretive institutions imposing

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<sup>129</sup> Martin Van Bruinessen, "Sufism and The Modern in Islam", available at:

[http://www.let.uu.nl/~martin.vanbruinessen/personal/conferences/sufism\\_and\\_the\\_modern.html](http://www.let.uu.nl/~martin.vanbruinessen/personal/conferences/sufism_and_the_modern.html), p.1

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, p.2

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

demanding regimes of spiritual practices. Clearly this is not the whole story, nor are these features always seen in a negative light, since, as shown above, cosmopolitans do join *tarekat* that have some or all of these features. Nonetheless, such negative images of *tarekat* still deter some middle –and upper –class Muslims who have an interest in Sufism. For some, there are also problems of perceived social distance in seeking spiritual direction in rustic environment.<sup>132</sup> In the case of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai, it is quiet clear that rural values dominated his Sufi discourse attracted the middle class. What *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai did is the crystallization of different levels of values: i) the Islamic values with Sufi version, ii) Sudanese rural values that concentrates on social cohesion and spirit of solidarity, communal base of solving problems and all the social traits of peasants and the pastoral communities. The phenomenon of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai revived Sufi rural values making them adaptive to urban middle class. Here the researcher is faced with the questions that: To What extent the Sammaniyya *tariqa* in Al Zariba is urbanized? To what extent *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai himself kept his rural nature.<sup>133</sup>

With regard to the phenomenon of Sufism of the middle class, a conference was held on 4-7 September 2003 on Sufism and the 'Modern' in Islam, and was organized by Griffith University (Australia), the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM, Leiden-Netherland) and the Centre for the Study of Islam and Society-Jakarta. The conference addressed questions of Sufism and modernity, they include attempts to answer the following questions:

- Are practices, institutions and intellectual traditions associated with Sufism disappearing or being significantly transformed as Muslim urban culture comes into apparently irreversible ascendancy?
- Where there appears to be a shift to 'legalist' Islam at the expense of popular devotional practices and Sufism, is this due to urbanization and other aspects of modernization or should other factors be taken into account?
- Where Sufism of one sort or another survives and flourishes, is it due to the persistence of traditional communities left behind by economic development or to creative adaptations that meet the needs of modern Muslims?
- What does "Sufism" mean to contemporary urbanites, especially those urbanites involved with the modern sector of their national economy?
- How have hierarchical and authoritarian characteristics of Sufi orders been reconciled, if at all, to democratic values and the increased individualism in the modern sector of developing and post-industrial countries?
- What do political forces play in the activation, suppression or otherwise of Sufi attitudes amongst "Sufis"?

## 2.2 Searching for Identity and Sufism

The Sudanese society like other Muslim societies passed through different experiences: i) anti-colonial struggle, ii) secular modernization, iii) Liberal, populist or socialist varieties of democracy or at least mass mobilization, iv) The Islamic resurgence

<sup>132</sup> Julia Howell, op.cit., p.718.

<sup>133</sup> From the field work in Al Zariba in May 2003, the researcher noticed that all sorts of modernization in the centre are only addressing the disciples of urban middle class. Al Buari's family kept the rural nature both in housing, social relations, as well as the role of the family as *Fakis* in Kordofan.

of the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>134</sup> What has happened in the 1970s and 1980s is that these left-wing forces were displaced by the Islamist ones. Left political parties have been marginalized-as is evident in Iran, Egypt, and Tunisia- and have often adopted a defensive ideological posture vis-à-vis Islamism. They now claim to respect Islamic values and seek compromise with the Islamist which the latter, often confident of their greater appeal, may not want to reciprocate.<sup>135</sup>

It is argued that the displacement (of secular with fundamentalism “Islamic wave”) has come about through several mechanisms. First, the left parties with their own secular and modernizing ideologies came to be associated with the culture and ideology of the ruling parties. They were seen more and more as just another representative of that state-centered and alien modernization that the Islamists rejected. Secondly, the social groups amongst whom the left had been based were often the secular intelligentsia and parts of the workers strata. Few had any following amongst the peasantry or the urban poor who were not part of modern industrial employment. In the new social conditions this has meant the development of the social bases for opposition, the urban poor were ones to whom the left was unable to appeal. Equally important, however, has been the success of the Islamists in acting as an organized and ideologically coherent opposition, that is to say, in rivaling the traditional left opposition in its own terms. Much as Islamists movements use traditional left opposition in its own terms. Much of Islamists movements use traditional forms of religious organization-mosques, the *madrese* or religious school, Sufi and other underground religious sects-they have also developed modern techniques and forms of organization normally associated with secular parties: welfare programmes, including educational and health centres, cassettes and videos of sermons and speeches by opposition leaders, nations-wide political organizations, and fund-raising mechanism.<sup>136</sup>

The economic crisis later faced by many Islamic communities including Sudan in the late 1970s deepened the problem of searching for identity among the middle class. In such a situation, being bearers of contradictions of being collaborators of colonialism and leaders of the process of de-colonization, some members of the middle class are afflicted by anxieties that led to a crisis of identity. This crisis becomes a source of meaning in the way that the purpose of certain actions is symbolically identity. In the so called network society, the search for meaning is normally organized around a primary identity, which is self-sustaining across time and space.

Individual’s identity is a byproduct of individual efforts to satisfy basic human needs, including various psychological needs. Religions often serve these psychological needs more comprehensively and potently than other repositories of cultural meaning that contribute to the construction and maintenance of individual and group identities. Religion frequently supplies cosmologies, moral framework, institutions, rituals, traditions and other identities. Supporting content that answers to individuals’ needs of psychological stability in the form of a predictable world, a sense of belonging, self-esteem, and even self-actualization.<sup>137</sup> It was Durkheim’s great insight that religion is

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<sup>134</sup> Farish A. Noor, “New Voices of Islam”, , ISIM Leiden, 2002, pp.vii-viii

<sup>135</sup> Fred Halliday, Nation and Religion in The Middle East, Saqi Books, London, 2000, p.148.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Jeffrey R. Seul, “Ours is The Way of God: Religion, Identity and Inter group Conflict”, Journal of Peace Research, Vol.36, No.5, Sage Publication, September 1999, p.553.

born out of the social circumstances providing those involuntary roots. People are led, he said, to represent their sense of unity in the groups of which they are members, to express that unity in ceremony and symbol in belief and ritual.<sup>138</sup> Within this context, religion appears as strong influential source of identity, and often takes part in the organization of this meaning. In all their multifarious expressions and dimensions, the world's religions answer the individuals' need for a sense of locatedness. Socially, sometimes, geographically, temporally and metaphysically.<sup>139</sup>

According to Jeffrey Seul, religious meaning systems define the contours of the broadest possible range of relationships, to self, to others, near and distant, friendly and unfriendly, to the non-human world; to the universe, to God, or that which one considers ultimately real and true. No other repositories of cultural meaning have historically offered so much in response to the human need to develop a secure identity. Consequently, religion often is at the core of individual and group identity. Hans Mol described the chief function of religion as the stabilization of individual and group identity. According to Mol, religious traditions and institutions resist constant change in the negotiation of social meaning, thus affording individuals and groups more secure anchors for self-reference.<sup>140</sup>

Religion in general tends to promote the stabilization of individual and group identity by favoring the preservation of old content (in the form of doctrine, ritual, moral framework, role expectations, symbols and the like) offering individuals a basis for constructing their identities within a stable or very slowly changing universe of shared meaning. Religion helps to absorb social changes. Among the mechanisms by which religion can sacralizes identity is what Mol calls "objectification", which is the tendency to sum up the variegated elements of mandane in a transcendental point of reference where they appear more orderly, more consistent and more timeless. The objectification of religious order enables individuals and groups to cope with change.<sup>141</sup>

In search of the primary identity, the strong emphasis of Islam on communal life and social responsibility is particularly appealing. Within communal life, people can freely define new meaning whereby identity can be regained.<sup>142</sup> Hasan and Majid stated that, within this context, modern Sufism proves not only a spiritual discourse but also the basis of communal life to disaffected members of the middle class. It is not however, in the sense of traditional Sufi orders-which emphasize the search of the ultimate goal of life, as a result of the tension with the world-or inward-looking mystics whose goals are geared towards achieving the highest stage of the vertical man-God relationship. Modern Sufism is, instead, a type of creative synthesis to the existing world order, which lies mainly in its tendency to promote the esoteric dimension of Islam and show its respect for pluralism and tolerance.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Phillip E. Hammond, "Religion and Persistence of Identity", Journal for The Scientific Study of Religion, Vol.27, no.1, March 1988, p.5.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid. p.558.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid. p.559.

<sup>142</sup> Noorhaidi Hasan and Ahmad Syafii Majid, "When Executives Chant Dhikr", International Institute for Asian Studies, Newsletter, no.28, Lieden University, August 2002, p.1. Available at: <http://www.ias.nl/iiasn/28/IIASN28-23.pdf>.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

Religious traditions often provide ready answers when pluralism and other forms of complexity threaten the established order and thus the identities of individuals and groups. The frequently non-relativistic nature of the answers of these questions may help explain the worldwide resurgence of religion as a rallying point for political mobilization. Religious communities and meaning systems also frequently are a source of the love (belonging) and affirmation (as a basis for self-esteem) that individuals seek. They encouraged self-actualization and even self-transcendence. Religious groups often are better equipped to address the identity needs of the “private self”.<sup>144</sup> According to Jeffrey Seul, religious texts and oral material embody among other things, myths, love, songs and prayers that contribute to identity construction in various ways. Texts and oral tradition also communicate teachings, belief and norms that have clear socialization effects, promoting order (which serves the need for psychological stability) and enhancing the group’s sense of specialness or purpose (which may serve the needs for belonging, self-esteem and self-actualization) wherever texts and oral tradition are affording revealed or inspired status, their sacralizing potential is for many enhanced. In addition to belief systems which include such ethical framework, Breakwell (1986) identified role prescription as another key factor in identity formation and maintenance.<sup>145</sup>

The Islamic revival among the middle class took place in different Islamic countries since 1980s. A country like Malaysia, witnessed different religious revival movements among the middle class. Though they are not Sufis in nature, however, they represent appealing of middle class to Islam. At the 1930s, there was an inflow of new Islamic ideas from the Middle East, under the influence of an urban, often foreign-born intelligentsia. The Kaum Muda simultaneously raised questions as to the legitimacy of local religious elites and attacked the orthodoxy of many of their teachings. At the same time, they launched a campaign to stimulate Malay ethnic consciousness, with Islam as their banner and symbol. Now that Malaysia is undergoing a second religious revival in the *dakwah* movement of the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>146</sup> ABIM (An organization of middle class with religious orientation) was founded in 1971 by a group of University of Malay students and teachers with strong ethnic and political convictions, almost all of urban middle class background. It is the most academic of the *dakwah* movement, with a didactic mode of instructions, has supported causes as the Baling Movement of 1974, and is a covert ally of the Islamic party PAS.<sup>147</sup>

This identity crisis made the middle class appealing to Sufism and paved the way for Sufi ideation. In Indonesia, contrary to expectations reasonably formed at mid-century that were based on assessments of the likely impacts of the changing educational system and of Muslim modernist reformism, devotional and mystical intensifications of core Islamic practice-in short “Sufism”-have survived. Indeed, they are being enthusiastically pursued, and not only by the elderly village men once thought to be Sufism’s sole refuge in the twilight of its existence. Rather, Sufi devotionism, including mystical practice, is alive and well in both country and city and has captured the interest

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<sup>144</sup> Jeffrey R. Seul, op.cit, p.559

<sup>145</sup> Quoted in Ibid., p.561

<sup>146</sup> Judith Nagata, “Islamic Revival and the Problem of Legitimacy Among Rural Religious Elites in Malaysia”, *Man, New Series*, Vo.17, No.1, March 1982, pp.43-44

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p49



of people who are well educated in the general education system-even members of the national elite. Moreover, Sufism, in diverse manifestations, has attracted people of both sexes who are still fully engaged in their career, including some now in positions of considerable power.<sup>148</sup>

In answering the question why Sufism is more appealing to the educated than orthodox Islam of the 'Ulama? First Sufism lies within a very personal experience. Sufism could be defined as the Islamic way of transcending one's own soul. The Sufi approach is based upon constant application to divine worship, complete devotion to God, aversion to the false splendor of the world. A Sufi who is practicing specific litanies and spiritual exercises is led to a specific approach towards understanding religion in particular and the world in general. Among Sufi circles there is no oppression for making specific rituals, no rigid application of *Shari'a*, modesty in dealing with all people regardless of their economic status, gender, ethnic origin. Also there is an individual solutions for problems that suits educated group in crisis. Under crisis the communal solutions of problems usually disappear and remains individual solutions. For this reason it is more appealing to the Muslim and educated masses than Orthodox Islam. Therefore there are two basic reasons for this Sufi mass appeal: a) The doctrine of Sufism itself. b) The crisis situation. In the same point, Hasan Makki asked the question that why the Sufis succeeded more than others in serving society and spreading Islam? For him the answer lies in the Sufis simplicity, modesty and in their addressing the poor, the sick person, males and females in tolerance without blaming any one or criticizing any one.<sup>149</sup>

In answering the question that Why the 'Ulama joined Sufi orders? Under what conditions? It is found that the 'Ulama joined Sufi orders in order to inject new revivalist spirit such as the case of Ahmad ibn Idriss whose concern was not confined to teaching *awrad* (litanies), to urge people to enter retreats and isolate themselves from man kind. Ahmad Ibn Idriss who taught and influenced the leaders of most activists Sufi orders in the nineteenth century Africa, think that such practices might be advantage for the personal development of individual disciples, but are not suitable for the higher purposes at which he was aiming: unity of Islamic world. Recent attention was paid to the phenomenon of the fact that Sufism is more appealing to the masses including the educated class.

### 2.3 Neo-Sufi Orders

The neo-Sufi ideation includes the return to the pure Islam of the Prophet's own times, a turn to the past as means of facing the future. While some movements (such as the Wahabiyya) aimed to destroy saint veneration completely, parallel movements occurred among mystics which aimed to reform Sufism to support a purer, more unified and socially engaged Islam. These movements including the Tijaniyya, founded by Sidi Ahmed al-Tijani and the Khatmiya, founded by Sidi Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani, have sometimes been labeled 'neo-Sufi'. This term must be used carefully, especially since numerous authors (including Rahman) have incorrectly equated the designation "neo-Sufism" with a radical shift in mystical doctrine, or a rejection of traditional rituals,

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<sup>148</sup> Julia Day Howell, op.cit., p.702.

<sup>149</sup> Abdel Latif Al Boni and Abdel Latif Sied, *Al Bur'ai: Rajul Al Waqt*, Qaf Publishing House, Khartoum, 2000, p.8.

yet recent scholarship has concluded that there is no historical evidence of such changes. It is founded that “neo-Sufi” orders thus exhibit most if not all of the following properties:

1-Charismatic founder of the modern age, who claims a privileged status as inheritor or gatherer of the spiritual power of older saints; veneration for the latter is largely subsumed within his own, thus providing him with the spiritual authority to revive reform, and adapt the *tariqa* to contemporary times.

2-Founder’s claim of direct spiritual dispensation from much older saints (often the Prophet or his immediate family), thereby validating formation of the order. Downplaying the medieval *silsila* is the mystical equivalent to the reformists return to the early Islamic community.

3-Spiritual and social unity: complete submission to the central rather than local *Shaikh*, veneration reserved almost exclusively for the founding saint, and the Prophet. Social unity is maintained through centralized social organization, and uniform codes, of behavior, defining a sharp social boundary between members and non-members; intolerance of multiple or nominal affiliation.

4-Pan-Islamic revivalist discourse used in active proselytizing, aimed particularly at the educated classes, and implicitly competing with other reform movements.

5-Modern social integration: Limitation of spiritual behaviors deemed anti-social, especially asceticism (*zuhd*), social withdrawal (*khalwa*). Affirmation of the importance of education, and productive social roles for members in modern society.

6-Clear affirmation of the centrality of Islamic law (*Shari’a*) for the Sufi life, though sometimes rejecting traditional schools of law (*Madhahib*) and sometimes affirming *ijtihad*.<sup>150</sup>

One of the clearest characteristics of the neo-Sufi phenomenon is the status assigned to the Prophet in Sufi tradition. According to Hoffman, scholars have long noted that Prophet Muhammad assumed increasing importance in Sufi thought and practice over the centuries. For Sufis, belief in Muhammad’s perfection often went beyond the standard affirmation of his immunity from error, and sometimes went so far as the assertions of the Spanish Arab Qadi ‘Iyad (d.1149/50) that Muhammad had assumed all the qualities embodied in the Ninety-nine Beautiful Names of God.<sup>151</sup> Devotion to the Prophet became a central motif of popular Islamic piety. Visions of the Prophet have always been part of Islamic tradition, but it has been argued that these were still relatively rare in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, though they had become a necessary attribute of those who aspired to sainthood by the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. According to Hoffman many scholars consider, annihilation in the Messenger of God (*fana fi-el-rasul*) or union with the Prophet is a distinctly “neo-Sufi” development, as evidenced particularly in the

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<sup>150</sup> Michael Frishkopf, “Changing Modalities in the Globalization of Islamic Saint Veneration and Mysticism: Sidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi, Shaykh Muhammad ‘Uthman al-Burhani, and their Sufi Orders”, *Religious Studies and Theology*, Vol.20, No.1 and 2, 2001. Available at: <http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/~michaelf/Changing%20modalities.rtf>., p.9.

<sup>151</sup> Valleri J. Hoffman, “Annihilation in the Messenger of God: The Development of a Sufi Practice”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.31, No.3., Cambridge University Press, August 1999, p.351.

Tijaniyya, Sanusiyya, and Mirghaniyya orders. These scholars see the idea of spiritual union with the Prophet as a replacement for the earlier ideal of annihilation in God.<sup>152</sup>

The researcher in a former work has clarified this concept of annihilation in the Prophet in the writings of the founder of the Sammaniyya order, Mohamed Ibn Abdel Karim Al-Samman, El Obeid stated that,

“Like many of the eighteenth and nineteenth century orders, the Sammaniyya doctrine is centred around the concept of the Muhammadan Reality. The Prophet is the mediator between Allah and Human beings. The Prophet’s love is the base of faith, the door of knowledge and the secret of power. Out of the Prophet’s Light, the creatures have been created; out of his generosity *fayd*, people and trees live. By the Prophet’s love, the slave obtains his needs and diminishes in his Great Light, reaching his ultimate goal. Thus could be said is the ultimate goal of the Sufi, is reaching the Prophet.”<sup>153</sup>

According to Frishkopf, Neo-Sufi orders, appearing more modern and respectable and better organized, could win a more educated middle-upper class membership possessing greater financial and political clout.<sup>154</sup> In the twentieth century Sudan, especially in the late 1970s, witnessed the transformation of some sections of the Sudanese middle class into Sufism. For example this could be touched in the case of the new Dausuqiyya branch in Khartoum under the authority of a charismatic new saint, *Shaikh* Muhammad ‘Uthman ‘Abduh al-Burhani, who claimed to be the hire of the entire Dasuqiyya tradition. While maintaining these exhibited new social characteristics of firm organization, centralization and ambitious expansion, reflecting the current trends of Islamic reform and revival which swept the northern Sudan in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>155</sup> It is significant to mention that the Burhaniyya in Sudan is mainly dominated among the upper Sudanese middle class, unlike the phenomenon of *Shaikh* Al Bur’ai which dominated the lower middle class, as we shall see.

The Burhaniyya Sufi order which represents strong affiliation of the upper Sudanese middle class, effectively fused medieval Egyptian ecstaticism and esotericism, Sudanese Sufi individualism and the centralized organization, revivalist spirit and proselytization of neo-Sufism.<sup>156</sup> The Burhaniyya *hadra* in Egypt is performed with both, aurally via unfamiliar Sudanese styles of *dhikr* and religious hymns. However the head of the Burhaniyya in Sudan was not able to be transformed into a figure attracts the masses as the case with *Shaikh* Al Bur’ai. Moreover the poetry of Muhammad ‘Uthman al Burhani was restricted to circles of the upper middle class, unlike the poetry of Al Bur’ai which attracted wider sections of the Sudanese. This point will be discussed later. The researcher here is faced with the question that why *Shaikh* Al Bur’ai was transformed into

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. 352.

<sup>153</sup> Citation by Muhammad ibn Abdel Karim Al Samman in Amani Mohamed El Obeid, “The Sammaniyya *Tariqa* in The Sudan: Doctrine and Politics”, unpublished M.Sc. dissertation in Political Science, University of Khartoum, 1997, pp.92-93.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Michael Frishkopf, op.cit, p. 8.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid. p.11.

a national figure and has no strong and vast international links with circles in the West as happened with the Burhaniyya? The Burhaniyya has no mass disciples but they have very strong international links.

The Burhaniyya *tariqa* is a new Sufi *tariqa* that attracted members of the upper middle class who opposes the practices of the traditional Sufi orders. According to Frishkopf *Shaikh* Muhammad moved to Khartoum in 1930 where he gathered followers. In 1958 he founded a Dasuqiyya branch in Khartoum, which attracted a massive following. Subsequently he established an independent order, the Burhaniyya Dasuqiyya Shadhiliyya, combining the charismatic forces of Sidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi, his putative uncle Sidi Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili (both characteristic of medieval Sudanese Sufism), and himself as reformist renewer.

From the start *Shaikh* Muhammad Abdu Al Burahni had strong relation with Egypt, the thing that opened for him the door of the outside world. Although *Shaikh* Muhammad visited Egypt as early as the 1930s, the *tariqa* seems to have been established there in the 1950s; according to *tariqa* members, *Shaikh* Muhammad traveled regularly between Sudan and Egypt from the 1950s onward. Saint and order exerted a powerful effect on Egyptians, to the alarm of its religious establishment. Like other neo-Sufi movements, the well-organized Burhaniyya drew many members from upper and educated classes who would never have involved themselves in traditional Sufism. According to Frishkopf, in the 1970s, the Burhaniyya swept through Egypt like a wildfire. The *tariqa* grew most rapidly in the 1970s, reportedly reaching three million by the middle of that decade. Frishkopf went further to state that Alongside *Shaikh* Muhammad's personal spiritual gifts and active proselytizing, this expansion was no doubt aided by contextual factors, including the spiritual vacuum in Egypt following the 1967 war, 1970s materialism and economic inequality resulting from the *infitah* (economic “opening” to the West), and Sadat's policy of promoting apolitical Sufism as a political bulwark against leftists and Islamic militants, whom he often repressed.

The researcher thinks that this international link from the start devoid the Burhaniyya *tariqa* from a national role inside Sudan, unlike *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai who kept his regional strong hold in Kordofan while penetrating the urban centers of Khartoum, Medani, Kosti and Port Sudan. Therefore more emphasis was put by *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai on local links and not international links. On the other hand we see that the Burhaniyya though attracted mainly the upper Sudanese middle class tend from the start to strengthen its international links.

What could be remarked from the above discussion is that: Neo-Sufism fostered new attitudes similar to some extent to the role played by the Protestant Ethic which also fostered new attitudes. According to this, a number of the new protestant doctrines substantially altered the thinking of many members of agrarian societies in the three areas:

- A) The thought that work is an important form of service to God supported the efforts of merchants and craftsmen to upgrade their status, “challenging” both the medieval Catholic view of work as a punishment for sin and the traditional aristocratic view of work as degrading and beneath the dignity of a gentleman.
- B) Undermined fatalism and trust in magic and, in the long run, stimulated the spread of rationalism.

- C) Emphasized the value of denying the pleasures of this world and living frugally, a practice that enabled those who became economically successful to accumulate capital.

## 2.4 Sudan Crisis Influence on Religious (Sufi) Re-Orientation

Sudan lives façade political and economic crisis that have its impact on the daily life of the citizens. The political crisis is manifested by the North-South conflict, commonly perceived as the Sudan's 'southern problem'.

Other manifestations of this crisis is the fact that the dominant social forces in the Sudan have failed to produce a national consensus on the fundamentals of governance such as the nature of the state, the functions of government, the role of culture in nation-building, the criteria for resource and power sharing, and the centrality of fundamental human rights. National consensus on these fundamentals is a condition *sinequa non* of good governance, a lack of which can have an implosive effect on the state system, and imposition of a sectional 'consensus' as the basis of government is a recipe for political conflict. Such conflict took violent forms in areas where the harshness of state oppression, poverty, and other factors leave the people with no other choice but to rebel.<sup>157</sup> This is evident by the regional rebellions in western and eastern Sudan.

The economic crisis is reflected in the development failure. Nimeri's turn to Islamic fundamentalism in 1983 was proof of the failure of developmentalism. It is founded that after the national reconciliation policy had brought the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic groups back to Sudan, the trend towards Islamization had accelerated. The Iranian revolution and the resurgence of Islam in the Middle East also had an effect. Although a number of explanations have been given for the sudden introduction of Islamic *Shari'a* law, it seems that Nimeri's intention was to outmaneuver the Muslim Brotherhood who had been calling for the Islamization of Sudanese society and would therefore have to support its introduction.<sup>158</sup>

The 1980s were truly a decade of political turmoil and deepening political conflicts. Increasing foreign dependence, food crisis, and social disintegration during the first half of the decade sharpened conflicts and led to collapse of the ruling alliance and a re-organization of the power bloc after 1985. The resumption of armed rebellion in the South, in which ethnic groups from different parts of the country participated, the escalation of banditry in the West, and student demonstrations in the cities compelled the regime to borrow another ideology. The situation permitted only one type of discourse: the ethnic discourse, and such discourse in the North requires a religious cloak.<sup>159</sup>

After severe war in Southern Sudan between the Islamist Salvation government and the SPLA in the period 1989-2003, in January 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) formally ended war between the Khartoum government and the

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid, p. 556.

<sup>158</sup> Charles Goudon, Sudan In Transition: A Political Risk Analysis, The Economic Intelligence Unit, Special Report No.226, 1987, p. 30.

<sup>159</sup> Endre Stainsen and Micheal Kevane, Kordofan Invaded: Peripheral Incorporation and Social Transformation in Islamic Africa, Brill, Leiden, 1998, p. 257.

insurgent Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), Africa's longest civil conflict. The CPA was the culmination of two and a half years of intense negotiations between the government and the SPLM facilitated by IGADD. It is premised on a fundamental compromise: a self-determination referendum for the South after a six-year interim period in exchange for the continuation of Islamic (*Shari'a*) law in the North. The deal was predicated on extensive sharing of power, wealth and security arrangements and established an asymmetrical federal system, with the Government of Southern Sudan existing as a buffer between the central government and southern states but no parallel regional government in the North.<sup>160</sup> However, ethnic discourse prevailed throughout Darfur and Eastern Sudan. In Darfur the ethnic discourse became drastic.

Therefore the emergence of Sufism among the educated group in the urban centres and the tribes in the periphery is a product of this deep crisis. The educated class which used to be secular and vanguard of lightening and modernization lost belief in political stances of many political parties as well as the SPLM and became demoralized. For example, the so-called Modern Forces, a term which included middle and lower middle class professionals, trade unions and various secular-oriented groups were sympathetic if, not supportive of, the SPLM's vocation. Some of them rightly saw the SPLM as an ally against the forces of sectarian and radical Islam. However, some of them lost their sympathy for the SPLA when the latter took the war to the North.<sup>161</sup>

In contemporary Sudan, Sufism of the middle class is a new phenomenon that started since the late 1970s. Though the Sufism of the *effendiyya* (who are educated state employers) started earlier since 1940s, it was within limited and individual circles. Those *effendiyya* used to pray together with an individual *faki* or *Shaikh* who belonged to the numerous small Sufi orders mainly in Omdurman town.

It has been argued that modernization and education created this wave of search for a new Islamic identity. John Voll suggests that "As more Sudanese receive a modern style education simple institution maintenance is not a sufficient expression of the Islamic identity. As a result it is possible to see a growing specifically Islamic content in the programs of groups in the Sudan. As this takes place, these statements take on a more explicitly fundamentalist tone".<sup>162</sup> However, the researcher thinks that this crisis did not lead to fundamentalism only but also led the educated Sudanese to adopt Sufism as a means to solve their crisis of identity.

## 2.5 The Phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*: Neo-Sufi Individual *Faki*

According to O'Fahey, neo-Sufism means a new organizational phenomenon that appeared in certain areas of the Muslim world in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In these areas, new orders were established that were relatively more centralized and less prone to fission than their predecessors; they introduced into the areas where they proselytized new forms of social organization, often based on autonomous agricultural communities, *Zawiya* or *jamaa*, recruited en masse, and later

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<sup>160</sup> International Crisis Group. "Khartoum-SPLA/M Agreement: Sudan's Uncertain Peace", *Africa Report* No.96, 25 July 2005, P.2.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid, p.261.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

were politically active.<sup>163</sup> These new orders had certain characteristics in common: Among these characteristics was the common Sufi tendency for the religious prestige of the founder of the “Way” to be inherited and made hereditary within his family. Such “routinization” was commonly accompanied by conflict and fission; in this respect the families of the neo-Sufi founders were no exceptions.

The researcher in a former work on the Sammaniyya order, showed the limitations of the concept of “neo-Sufism”.<sup>164</sup> However, the concept is valuable in terms of classification, yet it could not escape the characteristics of the orientalist school, which is centered on use of modernization approach as an explanatory tool to the rise and consolidation of many of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Sufi orders.<sup>165</sup> Neo-Sufism has a weak analytical perspective, as the process of localization and the subsequent institutional continuity and the cross cultural production that occurred in the Sufi orders’ institutions in different countries is not widely studied or analytically viewed, if not ignored.<sup>166</sup>

*Shaikh* Al Bur’ai died on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2005 after he attended the last sessions of Nivasha peace talks in January 2005. Started as an individual Sammani *Shaikh* in the 1940s, *Shaikh* Al Bur’ai gradually became popular for his unusual abilities of healing and mediation in tribal conflicts. *Shaikh* Al Bur’ai started his activities in the 1960s when he initiated an Islamic institute as part of the Quranic school in Al-Zariba as well as a “Group marriage festival” where 163 couples were married together in a way to cut down wedding costs and encourage modest dowries

In the 1980s, he was able to get wide popularity from his poetry and through the media. In the 1990s, *Shaikh* Al Bur’ai appeared as a celebrated national figure who has strong ties with most Sudanese politicians either in the Sudanese government of the *Ingazh* or in the opposition circles. In the media, *Shaikh* Al Bur’ai is presented as a religious instructor, charity maker and conflicts reconciliator. The charity making of *Shaikh* Al Bur’ai includes universities (Omdurman Ahaliya), mosques and hospitals. In the different cities of Sudan, *Shaikh* Al Bur’ai either has a mosque or a charity centre. His poetry cassettes dominate the media in *Madih* (praising of the Prophet) in Sudan, for the last fifteen years.

*Shaikh* Al Bur’ai is a Sammani *Shaikh*. The Sammaniyya *tariqa* is one of 19<sup>th</sup> century Sufi *tariqas*, which was introduced in Sudan by the Sudanese holymen Ahmad Al Tayyib Al Bashir who studied in Hijaz. *Shaikh* Abdel Rahim Al Bur’ai is not descending from the family of Ahmad Al Tayyib Al Bashir, but he was able to be one of the pillars of the Sammaniyya *tariqa* in contemporary Sudan.<sup>167</sup> In fact *Shaikh* Al Bur’ai attracted the Sudanese masses in general and the educated groups in particular.

*Shaikh* Al Bur’ai had different categories of disciples:

- 1) Audience of his poetry (*Madih*) that represent the wider group throughout the Sudan (in Western, Eastern and Northern Sudan) They include Sufis and non-Sufis. By virtue most of them are not of the Sammaniyya order. Here the media

<sup>163</sup> R.S.O’Fahey, *Enigmatic Saint: Ahmad Ibn Idris and the Idrisi Tradition*, Northwestern University Press, Illinois, 1991, pp.4-5.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., pp.59-61

<sup>165</sup> This is very clear in the study of John Voll of the Khatmiyya *tariqa* in Sudan, John Obert Voll, “The History of the Khatmiyya Tariqa in The Sudan”, Ph.D dissertation, Harvard University, 1969.

<sup>166</sup> Amani Mohamed El Obeid, op.cit, p.61.

<sup>167</sup> Hasan Makki, “*Al Shaikh Al Burai Gama’ byn al Adab wa al Razana wa Damathat al Khuluq wa al Sabr ala al Nass*”, *Al Rai Al A’m*, No.2689, 21 February 2005. p. 20.

- played a great role in spreading his *Madih* throughout the National Radio and TV. Most of this category did not visit *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai, but they are guided by his *Madih*. They represent higher number than those disciples found in Kordofan.
- 2) Visitors (*Ashab Al Hagat*) who come to *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai in order to find solutions for their own individual problems and they represent closer circle than his poetry audience. Also they are composed of Sufis and non-Sufis. As they are from different political backgrounds. Among his visitors you find the Communist, the Muslim Brother, the Ansar and visitors of Ansar Al Sunna. Most of them believe that *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai possess *baraka* and his wishes are divinely accepted. Most of them ask him to recite the Holy inauguration of Quran seeking their different wishes to be accepted. This category is mostly from the educated group.<sup>168</sup>
  - 3) Closer circle who usually come to *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai in order to pray with him. In Al Zariba center, most of these categories are from Kordofan. Also they consider *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai as a general individual *faki*.
  - 4) The most closer circle of his disciples who were initiated into Sufi path by *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai. They represent his Sufi disciples. By virtue all of them are Sammanis and they are very close to him.

*Shaikh* Al Bur'ai's first contact with educated Sudanese was in 1965 when the teachers of the Secondary school of Khor Taqat visited Al Zariba.<sup>169</sup> Then the school invited *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai to present Sufi poetry and preaching. Through Khor Taqat, Al Bur'ai was introduced in the circles of the educated Sudanese.<sup>170</sup> Then his published poetry was circulated in El Obied and other Sudanese cities.<sup>171</sup> The next chapters will answer the question why *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai attracted the educated Sudanese.

## 2.6 The *Baraka* (blessing) and *Karama* (miracle doings) of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai

The most important factor in the development of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai into popular figure in addition to his *Madih* is his reputation as *karama* maker and one who possesses *baraka*. Clifford Geertz has attempted to capture *baraka* meaning, he writes:

“Literary, “*baraka*” means blessing, in the sense of divine favor. But spreading out from that nuclear meaning, specifying and delimiting it, it encloses a whole range of linked ideas: material prosperity, physical well-being, bodily satisfaction, completion, luck, plenitude, and the aspect most stressed by Western writers anxious to force it into a pigeonhole with mana, magical power.”<sup>172</sup>

<sup>168</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmad, *Burai' Al Sudan*, Al Asbat Centre, Khartoum, 2006, p.65.

<sup>169</sup> Sa'ad El Din Mohammed Ahmed, *Kawkab Al 'Alam wa Failaq al-Islam: Al Bur'ai*, 2006, pp.34-36.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p.69.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Vincent Crapanzano, *The Hamadsha: A Study in Moroccan Ethno-Psychiatry*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, U.S.A, 1973, p.19.



In an early work, Trimingham stated that, the saints (*awliya*) are people honoured by God with His special favour, and the way in which this honour is manifested is through their possession of *baraka*, whereby miracles (*karamat*) are performed on their behalf. According to him, a miracle (*karama*) is an honour. The purity of a saints' life or doctrine is of a secondary importance; if he can work miracles, that is enough, he is a saint and therefore one to be feared and one whose protection is to be sought.<sup>173</sup> Saint veneration in Islam, comprising a broad constellation of beliefs and practices, has always exhibited processes of globalization. Saints (*awliya*; singular *wali*, literally "close" to God) are selected by popular acclaim, among the holy men and women of Islam, living and dead. In person, at the tomb or shrine, or via dreams, the saint is sought for blessings, intercession, and guidance. Sainthood status, confirmed by miracles (*karamat*), and the Divine gift of blessing (*baraka*), reflects the quantity and intensity of popular belief, as there is no official process of canonization. The power of the saint is most concentrated at his or her shrine (*maqam*).<sup>174</sup>

The term *karama* in our context has the specific meaning of a "miracle" performed by people other than the Prophets. i.e. the saints (*awliya*), that is every act that is contrary to custom performed by someone whose religion is considered sound. "*Kull fi l'khariq li-l'ada jara ala yad man zahara salahahu fi dinihi*". Some Muslim scholars have tried to locate a basis for this meaning in Quranic stories like that of the food sent to Maryam in the *Mihrab* (Quran, 3:37, 32), or the transformation of Bilgis throne from the Yemen by a companion of Solomon (Quran, 27: 40). These Islamic scholars argue that since neither Maryam's nor Solomon companions were Prophets, the miracles concerned could not be considered *Mu'jizat*, the term reserved for the miracles performed by the Prophets. The *M'ujizat* are manifest miracles, that is miracles granted by God to the Prophets as proof of their mission accompanied by a *d'awa* or proclamation and by a challenge to the unbeliever. While the miracles of the prophets must be widely known as possible, the saint must endeavour to conceal his *karamat*.<sup>175</sup>

Possession of *karama* abilities and miracle doing is considered the main reason of the transformation of a saint into a charismatic figure. Daphna Ephrat stated that the belief in the ability of the *wali* to manipulate divine forces, which shaped his perception as a charismatic figure is well illustrated in "*al-Tashawwuf ila Rijal al-Tasawwuf*". According to him:

"This hagiographic collection is replete with stories of Muslims of all social categories who turned to *awliya* to plead their case before God at times of personal and collective crises, such as sickness, natural calamities, starvation or acts of injustice and oppression by the powerful. Some flocked around a living saint, others visited the graves of the dead *awliya* scattered in the urban and rural areas".<sup>176</sup>

<sup>173</sup> J. Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in The Sudan*, Franck Cass, London, 1965, p.127.

<sup>174</sup> Frishkopt, op.cit., p.2.

<sup>175</sup> Maribel Fierro, "The Polemic About *Karamat al-Awliya* and the Development of Sufism in al-Andalus (Fourth/Tenth-Fifth/Eleventh centuries)", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, Vol.55, No.2, 1992, pp.239-240.

<sup>176</sup> Daphna Ephrat, "In Quest of an Ideal Type of Saint: Some Observation on the First Generation of Morocco Awliya in (*Kitab al Tashawwuf*)", *Studia Islamica*, No. 94, 2002, p.69.

The concept of *karama* or blessing is very linked to times of crisis. As showed above when societies witnessed different types of crisis, there appear the search for a saint or one who possesses blessing in order to play the role of savior. The concept of the “baraka” as shown is highly linked to charismatic leaders. This was very clear during the Mahdiyya where the Mahdi styled himself as the Prophet’s successor but did not attempt to cite proof texts from the Quran or the the *Hadith* to buttress his claim. His was a charismatic leadership in which *baraka*, implying an active power of holiness, played an important role.<sup>177</sup>

*Shaikh* Al Bur’ai is part of the Sammaniyya *tariqa*. Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Karim al-Samman (1718-75), the founder of the Sammaniyya order, was initiated into the Khalawtiyya order while on a visit to Cairo in 1760. Both Al Sammani and his successors continued to live in al-Madina and it was through their disciples that their message was propagated in Indonesia, Malaysia and Sudan. One of these disciples was Ahmad Al-Tayyib wad al-Bashir, who had also been initiated into the order while on pilgrimage to al-Madina, in about 1764. He succeeded in recruiting Sudanese followers especially in the Gezira, south of Omdurman, where the Hamaj Regent Nasir b. Muhammad Abi Likaylik, joined the order and granted him an estate.<sup>178</sup>

The arrival of more centralized and better-organized supranational orders, of which the Sammaniyya was a forerunner, helped to create an Islamic establishment whose impact exceeded tribal or regional boundaries and hence had wider political implications. However, the Sammaniyya lost its wider impact soon after its founder’s death. Ahmad al-Tayyib al-Bashir died in 1824, shortly after the Turco-Egyptian conquest of Sudan, without nominating his successor. Consequently the followers of the order split into several groups under the leadership of Muhammad Sharif Nur al-Da’im (d.1808/9), al-Qurashi wad al-Zayn (d.1878) and Ahmad al-Basir (d.1830). Hence the Sammaniyya, instead of assuming the stature of a centralized order with branches in several regions, split into numerous autonomous suborders, due to clashes of personality as well as ethnic and regional loyalties. This diffusion was exploited successfully by Muhammad Ahmad, the future Mahdi.<sup>179</sup>

Relationship between Islam and politics in Sudan is an old phenomenon that started since the era of the Funj Sultanate. Where individual holymen came to the Sultan, establish Muslim cells and became objects of reverence. The gradual disintegration of the authority of Sinnar Sultanate led to more involvement of the Sufi *Shaikhs* in the politics of their time. Gabriel Warburg argued that the relationship between Islam and State has been a problematic feature of Sudanese politics both before and after independence. Two main factors affect this relationship: the first factor is the fact that Sufism was predominant in popular Sudanese Islam, ‘orthodox’ Islam lagged far behind. Secondly, the Sudan achieved its first period of independence under a millennarian movement led by Muhammad Ahmad, the Mahdi. These two factors were obviously, connected since Muhammad Ahmad was himself a Sufi *Shaikh* before he declared himself as the expected Mahdi. Warburg added that the predominance of Sufism and the often rather superficial

<sup>177</sup> Gabriel Warburg, *Islam, Sectarianism...* op.cit., p.35.

<sup>178</sup> Gabriel Warburg, *Islam, Sectarianism and Politics in Sudan Since The Mahdiyya*, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003, p.4.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

base of Sudanese Islam were among the reasons which helped the Mahdist revolt to achieve such widespread popular support among Sudanese Muslims.<sup>180</sup> Those Sufi orders which survived and emerged in the Anglo-Egyptian period generally viewed prospects of neo-Mahdist rule with trepidation. They included first and foremost the Khatmiyya order, whose leaders rejected the Mahdist mission from the outset and escaped to Egypt with their Egyptian patrons. Other Sufi orders initially supported the Mahdi' but were later suppressed by *Khalifa* 'Abdallh. These included among others the Majadhib of al-Damer, the Ismai'iliyya order in Kordofan and the Sammaniyya, of whom Muhammad Ahmad himself was a *Shaikh* prior to declaring himself Mahdi.

The individual *fakis* in Sudan, which represented by *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai, is an old phenomenon. The demise of the Mahdist state opened the door for more contenders for political power in the form of individual *fakis*. In the first decade of the twentieth century, the phenomenon of the individual *fakis* is assigned to individual anti-colonialist uprisings and cult of the appearance of *nabi* 'Isa. The main source of inspiration and strength for these risings was the Muslim doctrine of *nabi* 'Isa (Prophet Jesus). It was generally believed among Muslims that the Mahdi would appear to fill the world with justice after it had been filled with injustice. But his mission would temporarily be halted by *al-masih al-dajjal* (the anti-Christ). *Nabi* 'Isa would soon appear, however, to secure the permanence of glorious Mahdiyya. The British officials first became acquainted with the *nabi* 'Isa cult in 1900 when a group of nine men, led by 'Ali 'Abd al-Karim formed a religious society which claimed that the time had come for the appearance of *nabi* 'Isa. The condominium authorities called them the "milleniumists" because they asserted that the appearance of *nabi* 'Isa would usher in a millennium of peace and happiness.<sup>181</sup>

During the Mahdist era and due to famine (AH 1306-1888) and the riots of the *Jihadiyya* and their harsh dealing with the citizens of the local area, the family of *Shaikh* Wagi' Allah and inhabitants of Al Zariba were forced to move to the White Nile, and they come back after things were settled.<sup>182</sup>

*Shaikh* Wagi' Allah used to interfere in tribal disputes, most of which was on land tenure and boundaries of land.<sup>183</sup> The tribes that have strong ties with the centre of Al Zariba are Al Gawama', Bani Gerar, Al Baza'a, Al Maqanin, the Kababish and the Kawahla.<sup>184</sup> They continued to be loyal to Al Zariba center because the center used to solve their tribal conflicts. Moreover because *Shaikh* Wagi' Allah was known as a *karama* maker (miracle doer). During *Shaikh* Wagi' Allah's life he used to bring *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai in front of the disciples and let him teach them the Islamic texts. Before his death, he asked *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai to lead the disciples in the Friday prayer.<sup>185</sup>

Despite his limited traditional Islamic learning of *Khalwa*, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai managed to adapt himself to modern life in Khartoum and other urban centers. He

<sup>180</sup> Gabriel R. Warburg, "Islam and State in Numayri's Sudan", *Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol.55, No.4, 1985, p.400

<sup>181</sup> Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim, "Mahdist Risings Against The Condominium Government in The Sudan, 1900-1927", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol.12, No.3, Boston University, African Studies Centre, 1979, pp.440-441.

<sup>182</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Burai' Al Sudan: waqafat ala Shati' Irthihih wa Harthih*, Al Asbat Centre, Khartoum, 2000, pp.20-21.

<sup>183</sup> Interview with *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai, Al Zariba, Kordofan, 4 January 2000

<sup>184</sup> Interview with *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai, Al Zariba, Kordofan, 3 January 2000.

<sup>185</sup> Interview with *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai, Al Zariba, Kordofan, 4 January 2000.

represented a moderate Sufi path, not influenced by the new Wahabi incursion that affected the religious ideation in Sudan since the mid 1970s. He made thousands of peaces of *Madih* (popular Sufi poetry) that attracted to him masses of the Sudanese including middle class that used to be secular in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Hasan Makki said that: "I got to hear the poetry of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai before I know him. We used to say his poetry while we are in Kober and Dabak prisons. The same thing took place while we were in the camps of Popular Army."<sup>186</sup>

His reputation as holy man and *Madih* poet represent savior to the Sudanese middle class in crisis. He tends to simplify religion. Over all Sudan he is known as *abuna Al Bur'ai* (father Al Bur'ai). His style of writing which summarizes the Sufi doctrine into simple in addition to celebrating all Sudanese Sufi figures in poems caused his popularity throughout the Sudan. Moreover, his reputation as Saint healer attracted the attention of some citizens of the Gulf countries who used to come to see him for various reasons. (mainly medical reasons).<sup>187</sup>

What *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was doing was developing the poor areas in Khartoum, El Obied and Wad Medani by building Islamic centers and mosques and by introducing new Sufi activities. Most of these are areas of displaced. It is noticed that he chosed remote areas where alcohol, prostitution and illegal acts are widely spread. It is noticed that after *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai came to these areas all these acts changed and people changed into new Sufi activities.<sup>188</sup> Here, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai could be considered as social reformer.

It is interesting that unlike other individual *Fakis*, Al Bur'ai encouraged his disciples to have modern education in formal schools and after that come to the maseed. He encouraged his disciples to study medicine, architecture, etc.<sup>189</sup> *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai worked to obtain means of modern life, but he kept simple life for himself. In other words, he followed the notion that: *Al Zuhd bi Al Qalb* (austerity is by heart). In this point he is like Tijanis who think that *Zuhd* is by Heart. This notion enabled *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai to build huge economic enterprise. This point will be discussed later.

What is noticed by the writer during field trips to Al Zariba is the high number of the disciples who attended the *maseed*. More than one thousand disciples are living and coming daily to the *maseed*,<sup>190</sup> and more than 1,000 disciples come to attend the Friday prayers from Al Zariba, other parts of Kordofan and Khartoum. Meeting *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was very difficult due to the crowdness of disciples and visitors who want him to solve their problems.<sup>191</sup>

It is noticed that there is a high level of organization in the *massed*. As it is divided into: i) the mosque in the center and the extensions of prayers, ii) the guests house which is very modern, iii) area of the ashes of the Quran fire, iv) the tomp of *Shaikh* Wagi' Allah, v) the *Khalwa* of the disciples, vi) house of the *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai himself, vii) special room for giving the visitors the *bakhra*, *hijab* and *mihayya*, which are basic elements of popular Sufism in Sudan. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was leading a relatively

<sup>186</sup> Abdel Latif Al Boni and Abdel Latif Saied, *Al Bur'ai: Rajul Al Waqt*, Qaf House, Khartoum, 2000, p. 6.

<sup>187</sup> Amani Mohamed El Obeid, "Small Sufi *Tariqas* in Omdurman: A Study of A Contemporary Sammani Center in Omdurman", unpublished paper submitted to Omdurman Project-CEDEJ, January 2000, p.10.

<sup>188</sup> Abdel Latif El Boni and Abdel Latif Saied, op.cit., p.17.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., p.16.

<sup>190</sup> *fi hadhrat Al Bur'ai*, Al Sahafa News paper, no.3703, 11 September 2003.

<sup>191</sup> From the field trip in September 2002.

large *Khalwa* for teaching Quranic sciences. The *Khalwa* ability to survive and persists as an active institution of communication of Sufism can be justified by:

- a) Economic use of available resources and use of self-help co-operative system in receiving the needed funds for running the *Khalwa*, students self-discipline and self-service.
- b) The communal support and sympathy with the *Khalwas* which takes the form of: direct offerings to the *Shaikh*, who is in charge of *Khalwa* in cash or kind by way of supporting the *khalwa*.
- c) On certain occasions such as *Sharafa* (scientific status) students are eligible to gifts from able people.<sup>192</sup>

*Shaikh* Al Bur'ai represents a phenomenon of transformation of an individual *faki* into a national figure. In the case of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai, it is quiet clear that rural values of social solidarity that dominated his Sufi discourse have attracted large sections of the educated middle class. This point will be discussed and examples will be given in future chapters. What *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai did is the crystallization of different values: 1) The Islamic values with Sufi version, 2) Sudanese rural values. The rural values are very clear in reviving values of spirit of solidarity, communal base of solving problems and all the social traits of peasants and pastoral communities. The phenomenon of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai revived Sufi rural values making them adaptive to urban middle class. After being popular in Khartoum, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai used to stay four to five days in Khartoum, then he goes back in order to attend Friday prayers at Al Zariba.<sup>193</sup> This is in order to maintain his strong hold in Kordofan. What distinguished *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai from other *Shaikhs* is that he kept his rural ties in the strong hold in al Zariba, despite of large audience from Khartoum. Individuals who attend *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai's council were from numerous tribes that include: Danagla, Shaigiyya, Halfawiyyin, Bidairiyya, Jaaliyyin, Manasir, Rufayyin, Kawahla, Missiryia, Bani Halpa, Funj, Shuluk, Neur, Dinka and others.

The importance of this study stems from the spread of the adherents of Al Bur'ai throughout the Sudan, strikingly among them are the large sections of the Sudanese middle class. Among the visitors (*Ashab Al Hajat*) you find girls looking for marriages, traders complain recession or bankruptcy or some one who have cheque without credit. Others want to establish commercial company, other intending to enter mortgage, an owner complains those who rent from him, a political candidate looking for winning the elections, student of graduate studies complaining the slowness of his supervisor, a physician looking for new site for his clinic, an employee claiming being layed out, a candidate looking for success, therefore we can see the visitors of the *Shaikh* represents a cell of modern civil society. All of them are educated and they represent members of civil society. According to Al Boni and Sied, the role of the state retreated and also institutions related to the state such as clubs, political parties, trade unions, and charity associations.<sup>194</sup> Part of this vacuum was filled by Sufism in general and *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai in particular. This point will be discussed in chapter six.

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<sup>192</sup> Al Asum Abdel Hafiz Ahmed, "An Analysis of the spatial Diffusion of Sufi Orders and Their Socio-Economic Impact on the Rural Life", unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Khartoum University, 1982, pp.223-224.

<sup>193</sup> Abdel Latif El Boni and Abdel Latif Saied, op.cit., p. 18.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., p.20.

*Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is known for his *Madih* (colloquial poetry in praising the Prophet). He has two basic volumes (*diwan*) on poetry: "*fath zhi al Ma'arij fi al Shi'r al Sudani al Dariq*) also he has "*Riyadh al Ganna wa Nur al Dujuna*). He made *Madih* in praising the Prophet and other Sufi *Shaikhs* of the Sammaniyya and other Sufi orders. It is significant to mention that the tone of the *Madih* of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is borrowed from local tones of Kordofan and Al Zariba.<sup>195</sup>

The poetry of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is widespread all over the Sudan. It is usually broadcasted from the Radio and the Television, published in the press, books, recorded in recording cassettes and videotapes. It has been recited by youth and elders with the traditional music instruments such as "lute, violone and guitar". Sometimes with tones borrowed from famous Sudanese songs. This phenomenon could be attributed, according to Al Boni and Said, to many reasons, such as: *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai chose current words for his poetry that could be understood by youth. Also he used to give his poetry the music of known songs, as he made a great use of the celebrated Sudanese songs.<sup>196</sup>

In addition to *Madih*, he was very concerned with building of mosques. In 2004, he launched a new mosque in Al Zariba, his main centre. He built a mosque in Um Damm Haj Ahmed, one of the rural areas of Northern Kordofan, the village of Miraikha near al Managil. He has different mosques in Um Ruwaba, El Obied, Medani, Omdurman (Um Bada), an Islamic Campus in Al Mjahdeen quarter in Khartoum and another one in Port Sudan.<sup>197</sup> Also he was concerned with building mosques in Southern Sudan, as he built a mosque in Wau and he intended to build more mosques in the South. It is said that he has more than twelve mosques throughout the Sudan.<sup>198</sup>

In addition to *Madih* and mosques building he is known for organizing simplified marriage celebrations in Al Zariba for the youth. One of the main activities that attracted the attention of Al Bur'ai since early 1950s is the simplification of marriage. He started projects to help the youth of low income to marry with low dowry. These festivals of marriage reached the peak during the *Ingazh* government when President Al Bashir attended marriage festival in Al Zariba in 1993, when 2,500 men and women got married.<sup>199</sup> It is significant to mention that *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai in 1998 adopted polygamy in order to solve the social problem of difficult access to marriage.<sup>200</sup>

Al Bur'ai is known for his anti-liquor drinking campaign. After he has been approved as the successor of his father in 1944, he managed to convince all the inhabitants of Al Zariba not to drink alcohol.<sup>201</sup>

## 2.7 Kordofan: Milieu of Individual *Fakis*

Kordofan occupies the center of Sudan, straddling the transition from Savvana in the south towards desert in the north. In 1983, Kordofan had a population of

<sup>195</sup> According to Muhamad Adam Tarnin, Faculty of Music and Drama, *Al Rai Al Am*, 21 February 2005, p.20.

<sup>196</sup> Abdel Latif El Boni and Abdel Latif Saied, op.cit., pp.14-15.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> "*fi hadhrat Al Bur'ai*", op.cit.

<sup>199</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahamd, *Burai' al Sudan*, 2006, op.cit, p.62.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., p.64.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid, 59.

3.2million, split roughly equally between north and south of El Obeid, the regional capital. Rural settled households made up 63% of the total.<sup>202</sup> The settled households live primarily from rain-fed small-scale agriculture, cultivating sorghum (*dura*), millet, sesame, groundnuts, watermelon and *kerkadeh*, many also keep cattle and small stock and farm acacia Senegal for gum Arabic.<sup>203</sup> Nomadic pastoralists made up 24% and urban population 13% of the population. There is seasonal migration between north and south, both of nomadic pastoralists and of household breadwinners seeking employment on the mechanized farming schemes in south Kordofan.<sup>204</sup>

In studying the phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, any researcher has to study two component pillars in this study: tribalism and Sufism, especially in Kordofan where a transitional society is in a process of transformation from tribalism into class society within a nation-state. With the appearance of Sufism as a religious and social movement transcending tribal boundaries, we can see an attempt to forge unity at the ideological level. A Sudanese historian notes that under the umbrella of Sufism, stability and a sense of unity and integration were realized among the people who lived in the territory of the Funj kingdom, and it was sustained for a considerable part of the reign of the Funj kingdom that lasted for three centuries. Almost all the subjects of the Funj kingdom were involved in Sufi sects, and it was rare to find any who was not influenced by Sufism in his life. We can cite as evidence that Sufism started to replace tribal ideologies and that Sufi *Shaikhs* began to replace tribal leaders in dealing with local issues. Moreover, Sufism succeeded in settling its own differences with the parallel juristic culture and finally assimilated it. Sufism continued to develop within its own internal logic and in its relation to the tribal ideology.<sup>205</sup>

The village of Al Zariba where the centre of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is lies 100 km in North-East of El Obied, also it is located in north of Um Ruwaba city, to which Al Zariba is attached. Most residents of this area are Gawama' tribe. Though the sons of *Shaikh Wagi' Allah* are not from the Gawama tribe, yet they own large areas of agricultural lands.<sup>206</sup> Due to an early conflict with the Dhabab tribe, *Shaikh Muhamd w. Dulib* interfered and the family of *Shaikh Wagi' Allah* moved to the present location of Al Zariba.<sup>207</sup>

### 2.7.1 History of Kordofan

Over the course of the eighteenth century the Funj province of Kordofan was invaded periodically and occupied for extended periods by the western dynasties of the Musabba'at, and by 1790 it had been definitively annexed by Dar Fur; then in 1821 the long colonial period began.<sup>208</sup> One of the significant factors in the history of Kordofan is

<sup>202</sup> Simon Maxwell, *To Cure all Hunger: Food Policy and food Security in Sudan*, Intermediate Technology Publications, London, 1991, p.208.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Simon Maxwell, op.cit., p.208

<sup>205</sup> Mahmud El Zain, "Tribe and Religion in The Sudan", *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 23, No.70, ROAPE Publications, December 1996, p. 524.

<sup>206</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Burai' Al Sudan: Waqafat Ala Shati' Irthih wa Harthihi*, Al Asbat Centre, 2000, p.13.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Jay Spaulding, "A Premise for Precolonial Nuba History", *History of Africa*, Vol.14, 1987, p.370.

the appearance of the *Jallaba* as a distinct social class that affected socio-economic set up until post-colonial period. It is found that the issue of inter-*Jallaba* divisions is of paramount importance in the analysis of the different factors which governed the expansion of commercial activities in Kordofan. As a result of the field trips, the researcher found that merchants are significant members of Al Bur'ai disciples. For this reason it is important to explain the historical development of the *Jallaba* in Kordofan and the expansion of trade activities in Kordofan.

Towards the end of the Turkiyya the *Jallaba* in Kordofan had become the regular tax payers on behalf of the *Baqqara* (cattle herders), as long as the latter supplied the *Jallaba* with slaves and some cattle. The government sent troops against the *Baqqara* only when they failed to stick to the deal with the *Jallaba*. The *Jallaba*, however, did not pay directly to the Turks, but took advantage of the general lack of cash in the treasury and the fact that the pay of the soldiers and other employees were 15 to 20 months in arrears. In order to survive, when they no longer received slaves as payment, the soldiers received advancements on their salaries from the *Jallaba* against bills of exchange at a loss of 40% to 50%. With these bills the *Jallaba* paid the *Baqqara* tribute to the government.<sup>209</sup> According to Bjorkelo, it is worth noticing that, as long as the peasants and the nomads alone carried the weight of the Turkiyya, the *Jallaba* did not represent a dangerous anti-Turkish front, but they even entered the service of the Turks as ill-reputed tax collectors in Kordofan. It was only when the government attacked their basic interests as slave hunters and traders, that they united with other social groups against the Turks.<sup>210</sup> The phenomenon of the *Jallaba* was transformed into merchants who have strong ties with capitalist formation in the country. These merchants represent a significant faction of Al Bur'ai's disciples.

Muslim holymen traveled to Kordofan during the two centuries before the fall of Sinnar and some established small communities. Their attempts to spread Islam among the people at large met with very slow success, in part because initially the holymen concentrated on converting elites (whether economic or political) rather than the common people. Certainly this was the pattern in the Nuba Mountains. Although early documents suggest that Muslim teachers lived among the notables and common people in the Taqali massif as early as the 1600s, popular conversion was delayed until the 1800s when it seems to have been related to a new phase in the state-building project of the Muslim kings.<sup>211</sup> Stiansen and Kevane questioned that how, when and why the people of Kordofan north of the Nuba Mountains came to define their identities as Muslim (and often as Arab as well). They suggest that due to lack of resources, they reached the fact that, the Islamic holymen, whether operating on their own or as missionaries for the great Sufi brotherhoods, were only successful in changing and transforming the identities of the mass of the ordinary farmers and herders after a long incubation period. The process probably accelerated in the nineteenth century, and clearly the Egyptian military rule of Muhammad Ali, the intensification of slave raiding, and subsequently the Mahdist victory gave an obvious incentive to join and identify with the victorious forces, whose

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<sup>209</sup> Anders Bjorkelo, "Turco-Jallaba Relations 1821-1885", in Leif Manger (ed.) *Trade and Traders in The Sudan*, African Savannah Studies, Bergen Occasional Papers in Social Anthropology, no.32, Published by Department of Social Anthropology, University of Bergen, 1984, p.93.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., p.94.

<sup>211</sup> Endre Stiansen and Micheal Kevane, opcit., p. 21.



language and ideology were that of Islam. Sufi *tariqas* like the Tijaniyya, the Khatmiyya and the Isma'iliyya, headed by local *Shaikhs* and integrated into regional political and market structures, facilitated the process by providing the “convert” with a set of locally powerful like-minded companions. On the other hand, breaking with local norms of identification meant necessarily risking isolation and exclusion from circuits of social solidarity.<sup>212</sup>

In the case of the Khatmiyya, its great success in Sudan according to Warburg, probably resulted from the following factors. First, due to its superior organization it was able to face challenges to its influence and did not suffer from internal splits like those which, afflicted the Sammaniyya. Secondly, the Khatmiyya was the first among the new *Sufi* orders of the Idrisi tradition to arrive in Sudan and hence its message was more coherent and less tainted by local superstitions. Thirdly, and probably most importantly, Sayyid al-Hasan exploited the fact that the older and smaller *Sufi* orders had been largely discredited and partly destroyed by Sudan's Egyptian rulers. He thus came to the riverain tribes, such as the Shaigiyya, as the charismatic holy man in whose *tariqa* they could find a substitute for their traditional institutions and superstitious *fakis*. Lastly, the Khatmiyya benefited from its association with Sudan's new rulers, namely the Turco-Egyptians, whose conquest of Sudan coincided with the expansion of their *tariqa*.<sup>213</sup> Warburg went further to explain that, The Khatmiyya was, as mentioned above, the only well-organized *Sufi* order that fully collaborated with the Turco-Egyptian rulers. Not unlike the government, the Khatmiyya encouraged a more centralized ‘orthodox’ Islam rather than the diffused *faki*-orientated Sufism that had prevailed in the Funj Sultanate. It therefore found natural allies in the Turco-Egyptian rulers. The religious centres of the Khatmiyya were not only tolerated, but were even subsidized by the new rulers, who also exempted the Khatmiyya *Shaikhs* from taxation. As for the older generation of holy clans and Sufi orders, several methods were employed in order to undermine their leadership, although with varying degrees of success. The introduction of *Shari'a* courts and government-subsidized Quran schools (*Khalwas* or *kuttab*s) was aimed at curtailing the Sufi hold over their adherents. In certain cases, sons of *Sufi* leaders were sent to al-Azhar to study and were later appointed to government posts as teachers or *qadis*.<sup>214</sup>

The Isma'iliyya order in Kordofan is a good example of the influence of religion in Sudanese politics. Led by Muhammad Isma'il al-Makki, the Isma'illiyya, which had been oppressed by the Turkish administration, embraced the Mahdi as the expected savior even before his manifestation as al-Mahdi al-*muntaẓar*, in June 1881. This support, combined with that of the powerful Baqqara tribes in Kordofan and Dar Fur, provided the Mahdi with the popular base required for his campaigns in the west. The surrender of El-Obied on 19 January 1883 gave the Mahdi an urban administrative centre and Kordofan formed the first nucleus of a territorial Mahdist state.<sup>215</sup>

## 2.7.2 Tribal Formation in Kordofan

<sup>212</sup> Ibid, pp.21-22.

<sup>213</sup> Gabriel Warburg, *Islam, Sectarianism and Politics in Sudan Since The Mahdiyya*. The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003, p.5.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., p.9.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid, pp.35-39.

A tribe could be considered as a group of individuals bound together by kinship ties either through common ancestry or intermarriage. This broad definition does not claim that in Kordofan the tribes were static bodies but rather that they were flexible political entities that changed in response to internal dynamics and external pressure.<sup>216</sup>

This section tries to discuss what is the role of tribal element in *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* ideation and development as a national figure. It was basic premise of the colonial official mind-exemplified by men like Rudolph von Slatin and Harold Mac Micheal-that the "tribe", with its own territory (*dar*), law and chief, was the most significant social unit of Sudanese society. This emphasis on the "tribal" nature of the Sudanese rather than their long tradition of subordination to state authority was somewhat ironic; after all, the British filled the slot traditionally reserved for central governments in Sudanese society with relative ease. The colonial administration, however, was not blind to class differentiation and in so far as the "better class of natives" on whom all hopes for progress were pinned consisted of members of the "tribal" aristocracies, the concept of class and "tribe" did not conflict.<sup>217</sup>

The main ethnic groups inhabiting North Kordofan state are the Bidairiya, Juwama, Dar Hamid and Hamar. This is in addition to the Kababish, Bani Gerar and Hawawir. Other minority groups such as the Dajo, Baroo, Barno and Hausa form a significant portion of the state inhabitants.

The fact that the state relies on local political structures to control vast areas has been a constant feature in the history of Sudan, at least since the Funj regime. Through the Funj Sultanate (1504-1821), the "tribe" was the main social, political and administrative unit in northern Sudan where nomadic groups constituted the majority of the population in most areas. The centralization and bureaucratization of the Turco-Egyptian period (1821-1885) didn't lead to the loss of the role of the tribal chiefs who were given official responsibilities under the authority of the agents (*mudir* and *mamur*: *prefets* and *sous-prefets*) of the adopted French system in Egypt) of the central government. According to Delmet, they mainly assisted the new administrators by being a link with the local people and by collecting taxes. Traditional institutions and leaders: *nazir*, *hakim al-khutt*, *shaikh al-balad*, *umda*, were so maintained in secondary but necessary roles.<sup>218</sup> Delmet went further to state that the Mahdist state was hostile to any tribal organization and reduced such aristocracies who were never given a role in the government and administration of the Islamic Sudan. Those who didn't agree were severely punished and their tribe weakened.<sup>219</sup>

Under the Turco-Egyptian regime the heads of Kordofan tribes were in general left free to administer their affairs with little interference from the central government. Within the boundaries of each tribal *dar* a chief continued to be responsible for protecting the *dar* from attacks or cattle raids. He regulated transfer of blood-money among the members of the tribe and their neighbours, and arranged for settlement of disputes that if

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<sup>216</sup> Ahmed Ibrahim Abu Shouk, "Kordofan from Tribes to Nizarate" in Endre Stainsen and Michael Kevane, op.cit , p.120.

<sup>217</sup> L.Kapteijns and J.Spaulding, "History, Ethnicity and Agriculture in the Sudan", in G.M.Craic (ed.), The Agriculture of the Sudan, Oxford University Press, 1991, p.94.

<sup>218</sup> Christian Delmet, "The Native Administration System in Eastern Sudan: From its Liquidation to its Revival", in Catherine Miller (ed.), Land, Ethnicity and Political Legitimacy in Eastern Sudan: Kassala and Gedaref States, CEDEJ, 2005, p.145

<sup>219</sup> Ibid. p. 146.

left unresolved might damage the unity of the tribe. He also functioned as interpreter of the customary law that governed the internal activities of the tribe and its relations with neighbours, and as organizer of large-scale migrations. In carrying out such duties he had no coercive power but depended on the consensus of his tribe and support from the heads of the lineages (sections). This tribal system was subjected to a number of changes under the Mahdist regime (1881-1899). The *shaikhs* and members of their tribes who supported the Mahdists were recruited as officers and soldiers, and large numbers were moved from their tribal areas and stationed at the capital (Omdurman) and provincial headquarters of the Mahdist state. Those who opposed the Mahdist revolution were deported to Omdurman and kept under a form of house arrest under the Khalifa's watchful eye. Prominent figures like *Shaikh* al-Manna Islmai'il of the Jawama' were executed and others were dismissed from office. Some opponents of the Mahdi took refuge in the Nuba mountains. A third category included those who remained in Kordofan where they were placed under the full control of the Khalifa's deputy at El-Obied or his subordinates (*ummal*, sing. *'amil*) at Bara, al-Tayara and Abu Zabad. With the downfall of the Mahdist regime and break-up of its armies in 1898, the people of Kordofan who had been scattered by, or moved with, the Mahdists forces returned to their homelands, where they gradually restored the tribal system.<sup>220</sup>

According to a Sudanese researcher, the British throughout their different territories followed a consistent policy aimed at preserving native culture. Native customs, beliefs and behaviour, being manifestations of innate qualities, should, where possible, be preserved. In multi-ethnic colonies the preservation of different indigenous cultures necessitated the differentiation of the peoples along ethnic, linguistic and often religious lines. This in turn culminated in the strengthening of identification within group and in the sharpening of divisions between them.<sup>221</sup> The British emphasis "on the solidification of communal identification in turn discouraged the searching out of commonalities that transcend differences...such as common language and culture....As a result, the move towards integrating these communal groups into one nationality was much more difficult. The ultimate consequence, especially after the departure of the British, was a tendency toward disintegration of these multi-ethnic countries, as exemplified by the cases of Nigeria".<sup>222</sup>

Native Administration was very vital in Kordofan in the 1920s and 1930s. It is stated that the powers of Nomad *Shaikhs* Ordinance was enacted to regulate the authority of nomad *Shaikhs* in the northern Sudan. By the end of 1923, about three hundred *Nazirs* and *'umdas* had been authorized to exercise judicial powers in rural areas, and of these almost two hundred were in Kordofan.<sup>223</sup> It could be considered that the adoption of Native Administration in Kordofan was the first step towards change and connection with the center of Sudan. According to the Native Administration system, amalgamation of tribes took place; five districts of Kordofan were amalgamated into eight native administration units with full administrative, judicial and financial powers over the people under their control. The proposed administrative confederacies were: (i) A

<sup>220</sup> Ahmed Ibrahim Abu Shouk, op.cit., p. 122.

<sup>221</sup> Kamal Osman Salih, "British Policy and the Accentuation of Inter-Ethnic Divisions: The Case of the Nuba Mountains Region of Sudan, 1920-1940", *African Affairs*, Vol. 89, No.356, July 1990, P.417.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., p.418.

<sup>223</sup> Abu Shouk, op.cit., p. 126

Northern Nomad confederacy including the Kababish (both of Kordofan and Dongola), the Hawawir, the Nubas and the Northern Hills, the Geriat of Khartoum Province and possibly the Kawahla. (ii) A Dar Hamid Confederacy including the Dar Hamid tribes, the Ferahna, the Western Meganin...The Maalia, the Maagla, and the Zeyadia and possibly the Kawahla. (iii) A Bara Confederacy including all the Bara independent *omodias*... (iv) A Gawama Confederacy including the Northern Gawaama (now in Northern Kordofan), the Eastern Gawama', the Habbania, the Bazaa'a, the Ghodiat the Nuba (v) A Hamar Confederacy including the three Hamar Nizarates and the people of Kaja Serrug. (vi) A Messeria Confederacy including the Nuba and Dagu of the Messeria country. (vii) A Humr Confederacy including both sections of Humr.<sup>224</sup>

Tribal formation was very linked to land tenure throughout the Sudan in general and in Kordofan in particular. By the time the colonial administration was established in 1898, three main forms of land tenure were in existence. These were as follows:

- i) Where settled farming had been practiced, members of the community had rights dependent on the consent of the community leaders. Normally, nobody would claim rights over land cultivated by others. Land may or may not have been inherited, but certainly could be changed if it became exhausted. Abandoned land could be offered to other people. Ties to specific plots were loose.
- ii) In some cases, in some communities, land was recognized as being privately owned. This could be inherited, sold or rented. This type of ownership had been established over land which had been cultivated continuously over a long period. For example, in the riverain lands of Central and Northern Sudan, in the Tokar and Gash deltas, land irrigated by floods waters in the *wadis*, and also in the Gezira rainlands and Nuba mountains
- iii) In the case of pastoralists communities, land was normally used communally. Organization of land among different tribal segments had been, and still is, vested by the community in the hands of their leaders.<sup>225</sup>

The state has been the major force behind the commoditization of land. Obviously, its role is conditioned by the socio-economic and political factors prevailing at a specific time. The role played in the transition to capitalism by the large landowning class in many other places, is played by the state in the Sudan.<sup>226</sup> Commoditization of land and strengthening the tribal institute is very linked together.

The fostering of tribes as alternatives to *tariqas* was very pronounced in Kordofan, where large, new tribal entities, such as the Dar Hamid, the Hamar, and the Kordofan Bidayriyya, were constructed. Douglas Newbold, Governor of Kordofan during the 1930s, even boasted "we have done about twelve important tribal federations on the last five years". An example may illustrate the meddlesome nature of identity-creation promoted during the Condominium. In January 1937 the Nazir of the Hamar, Mun'im Mansour, was sent a brief letter by the District Commissioner (DC) of Eastern Kordofan,

<sup>224</sup> Ibid, p. 127.

<sup>225</sup> Abbas Abdelkarim, "Some Aspects of Commoditisation and Transformation in Rural Sudan", in Tony Barnett and Abbas AbdelKarim (eds.), Sudan: State, Capital and Transformation, Croom Helm, New York, 1988, p.155.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., p. 156.

asking for the whereabouts of the two Shanabla *shaikhs* Yusif al-Dud and Sinada al-Tum who were wanted in connection with *tulba* (sometimes referred to as tribute, sometimes as an animal tax). The residence and allegiances of the two *shaikhs* were to occupy the attention of the District Commissioners for the next fourteen years, at least through 1951.<sup>227</sup>

As part of Kordofan, Al Zariba got to have strong relations to tribal chiefs throughout Kordofan. The key to this relationship was tribal conflicts, where the heads of the tribes used to address *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai in order to solve these conflicts. In this way *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai established his career as a *Shaikh* who has influence over tribes throughout Kordofan in general and Northern Kordofan in particular. This fact could explain why *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai kept his strong hold in Kordofan despite being a national figure.

### 2.7.3 Socio-Economic set up of Kordofan

large numbers of the disciples of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai are merchants who seek his blessings to their commercial activities. This phenomenon in itself is coincided with the expansion of the capitalist economy that brought about a parallel distinction between urban and rural areas and inside the urban sector itself to the benefit of the commercial merchant class.<sup>228</sup>

The rise in the volume of market-oriented activity in western Kordofan after the extension of the railway to al-Obied in 1912 and the annexation of Darfur in 1916 brought new opportunities that led to greater class differentiation and social stratifications. The gradual increase of exports and imports accompanied the breakdown of the pre-capitalists subsistence-oriented social formations and their sub-ordination to and increasing dependence on metropolitan capitalism. The capitalist economy was deepened also by the policy of incorporating small-scale peasants and nomads into the realm of the market economy through the imposition of a tax system that forced them to seek sources of cash to pay their taxes.<sup>229</sup> According to Al Karsani, the invigorated market economy became the central focus for the activities of various contending forces in western Kordofan in general.<sup>230</sup>

The paradox of Kordofan is that neither of the two interpretations seems correct. The economy has been characterized more by continuities than dislocations. The replacement of formalized, community-level, and constrained or ritualized processes for transacting goods and services with informal, individually-based, market transactions (especially for land and labour) has led to minimal change in the "real" economy. There has been little adoption of new technology, with few exceptions no creation of infrastructure, no real evolution toward more complex forms of market organization (such as corporations or contract farming); no striking process of differentiation; little proletarianisation; few industrial labourers. Most men and women in Kordofan continue to work and live in material worlds similar to those of the past. The dynamism (positive

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<sup>227</sup> Endre Stainsen and Micheal Kevane, op.cit, p.29.

<sup>228</sup> Awad Al Sid Al Karsani, "The Tijaniyya Order in Western Sudan", op.cit., p.221,

<sup>229</sup> Awad Al Sid Al Karsani, "Religious, Ethnicity and Class: The Role of The Tinjaniyya Order in Al Nahud Town", in Endre Stainsen and Michael Kevane, op.cit., p. 180.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid,

and negative) associated with the market economy has to a very large extent been stymied.<sup>231</sup>

Religion can play a distinct role in facilitating the processes of ethnic integration and class formation in a situation of inter-ethnic tension in a rapidly developing market economy. Supra-ethnic organization in the form of the Tijaniyya informal committees for example opened new social and economic horizons for the various members of the order to act together as a cohesive group. This cohesive group was able to benefit from the changing economic conditions of the western Sudan during the 1930s-1940s, mainly the establishment of crop-auction markets and the *tamwin* (rationing of goods) system during the war. In this case of mounting competition over access to scarce economic resources (and to achieve a new identity in the case of West African immigrants) religion was the main determinant of achievement.<sup>232</sup> Al Karsani reached the conclusion that with the absence of any centralized leadership at the national level, al Nahud town's Tijanis, which was his case study, were unable to promote their unity to the realm of politics.<sup>233</sup>

#### 2.7.4 Islam in Kordofan

Kordofan social structure is centered around three institutions: a) The state b) the tribe and c) the *tariqa*. A process of localization of Islam and Sufism took place in Kordofan. Although leadership of the *tariqa* was often foreign, the *shaikhs* embedded their work in Kordofan by promoting veneration of local saints and opening schools (*khalwa*) for religious learning; the tall *qubba* marking the grave sites of saints and the house of the *Shaikh*, where children studied the Quran, both localized Islam. At the same time, the *tariqa* had quite a different effect on the local population, since it drew them out of their local frame reference. Pilgrimages to the holy cities or a *Shaikh qubba* in a distant village were encouraged which facilitated the breakdown of localities by the *tariqas* adopted common clothing styles, for instance, such as long robes for men and the *tobe* for women modeled on their foreign leaders and their families. In the field of religion in Kordofan, there are two reasons for continued dynamism and institutional change in the religious sphere: First changes in power and policy of the central state, of which there have been many, have at times influenced religious practices. Second, institutions such as the *tariqa* have to achieve a dual objective: attract new followers and satisfy the needs of members.<sup>234</sup>

The consolidation of the *tariqa* institution took place during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was very clear in Kordofan. Al Gaddal summarizes changes of 19<sup>th</sup> century Sudan as following: The collapse of three political systems, two foreign invasions, a national liberation movement, the formation of the political entity of present-day Sudan, the crystallization of the a socio-economic system, the rise of the commercial middle

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<sup>231</sup> Endre Stainsen and Michael Kevane, op.cit., p. 33.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> Quoted in Ibid., p. 195.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid, pp.22-23.

class and the gradual affiliation with and integration into the growing world capitalist market.<sup>235</sup>

During the Turkish era, the Sufi *turuq* were not only religious organizations, but they also performed social, educational, and medical functions. Those holy men maintained strong powers over the minds of the people through *baraka* and *karama*. According to Al Gadal, *karama* and *baraka* were a safe refuge to the masses at times of extreme crisis. He stated that the ignorance of the people hindered all efforts of orthodox Islam to penetrate the Sudan, and hence “the enormous influence of the *fakis*” who were credited with a supernatural power and were venerated. It is stated that the Turkish colonial policy was not in the least a substitute. Although those *turuq* were kept outside the political arena, yet they remained an integral part of the daily life of the people, but kept a low profile. They became the silent opposition. However, they proved resilient and came out *en masse* to bring its final destruction, though under a new banner.<sup>236</sup>

### 2.7.5 Individual *Fakis* in Kordofan

The phenomenon of the individual *faki* (holymen) is wide spread in Kordofan. It is one of the oldest traditions that brought Islam to the region from the late Middle Ages onwards. An example of the prominent individual Sufi *Shaikhs* in Kordofan is *Shaikh Badawi wad Abu Safaiyya*.<sup>237</sup> According to Al Karsani, following the nineteenth century revolt of Al-Mahdi, messianic and millenarian expectations were strong in the west, and such *fakis*, who often borrowed ideas from Mahdist or other sects, were associated with a number of local uprisings both before and after the First World War.<sup>238</sup>

The atmosphere in Kordofan in the period 1898-1936 was full of messianic and millenarian expectations. To the British, the region was regarded as the most dangerous of the northern Sudan, with its unsophisticated and potentially ‘fanatical’ population.<sup>239</sup> It is cited by Gabriel Warburg, that Sir Reginal Wingate, the Governor-General, wrote in 1908 that ‘no doubt there is plenty of latent Mahdist and until the generation born and brought up in that faith has died out we shall be subject to these outbreaks’. According to Al Karsani, Sir Wingate fears were particularly borne by the frequency of revolts in western Sudan, where officials were always on the alert and trying to assess the danger. In Northern Kordofan the local administrators were worried by the many individual *fakis* who settled among the tribes of the area preaching Mahdist tenets and that the second coming of Prophet ‘Isa (Jesus) was near. (According to certain Muslim teachings the Mahdi will be followed by al *Dajjal*, the anti-Christ, who will in turn be succeeded by the second coming of Jesus, Nabi ‘Isa). Al Karsani continued that the Meramara were the largest tribal group who ‘believed in Mohammad Ahmad as the true Mahdi’. Among the other tribes of the area the local District Commissioner remarked: “I am afraid Northern

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<sup>235</sup> Muhammad Said Al Gaddal, “Religion in a Changing Socio-Political Structure: A Case Study of Islam in Nineteenth-Century Sudan”, In M.W. Daly (ed.), *Modernization in The Sudan: Essays in the Honor of Richard Hill*, Lilian Barber Press, New York, 1985, p.49.<sup>235</sup>

<sup>236</sup> Ibid, p. 52.

<sup>237</sup> NRO, Mis 1/247/3241 Al Quom Journal, First issue, October 1984, pp.37-38.

<sup>238</sup> Awad Al Sid Al Karsani, “The Establishment of Neo-Mahdism in The Western Sudan, 1920-1936”, *African Affairs*, Vol.86, No.344, July 1987, p.386.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., p.387.

Kordofan is not entirely free from the Mahdist taint...The "Ratib" [al-Mahdi's prayer book] has been believed to be read by several of the Gilaidat and Ferahna.<sup>240</sup>

Individual *fakis* have social roles. One of these roles is feeding and curing the poor. Watt has speculated that the heavy emphasis of the Qur'anic message on the necessity of feeding the poor derived from Muhammad's (the Prophet) concern with the breakdown of nomadic values, which imposed corporate responsibility for the care of the poor, weak and defenseless in the new and prosperous mercantile center in which he lived.<sup>241</sup> Influenced by this fact, Sufism began as a pious reaction against the growing worldiness of Muslims in the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, accompanied by avoidance of government officials and rich people who were likely to be corrupt by their power and wealth. However with neo-Sufi phenomenon, Sufism developed gradually from a movement of extreme asceticism in an early stage to a movement of broad social appeal with an increasingly pragmatic attitude towards the practice of basic Sufi disciplines and devotions with the context of daily life. Within this context Hoffman when surveying modern Sufism in Egypt found that Sufis emphasize that renunciation of the world occurs in the heart, not "with the hand" and that physical renunciation of the world is useless if love for the things of the world remains in the heart.<sup>242</sup> Therefore in modern Egypt there is a growing tendencies towards modern life among Sufis that includes education and wealth. Hoffman states that: "Today the majority of Sufis work and although Sufism continues to draw primarily from lower classes, many Sufis have prominent position in society and are quiet wealthy".<sup>243</sup> The same phenomenon is taking place in the Sudan where education and wealth are remarkable features of modern Sudanese Sufism.

The re-appearance of the individual *fakis* in the Sudan in 1970s-1980s and 1990s has some distinctive characters that attracted the educated groups and that make it a distinct phenomenon. It is argued that those Sufi *Shaikhs* are scholarly oriented; some of them have secular education such as the Sammani *Shaikh* al Gaili in Tabat, in Gezira State. Moreover they made a reinterpretation of the neo-Sufism. That is by appealing to moderate *Shari'a*, the glorification of the status of the Prophet in their daily life and their poetry such as the case of *Shaikh* al-Burai'.

## 2.8 Conclusion

The importance of this study stems from the spread of the adherents of Al Bur'ai throughout the Sudan, strikingly among large sections of the Sudanese middle class. This remarkable transformation of the ideation of the Sudanese middle class into Sufism took place in the last fifteen years made it a real social phenomenon that deserves to be studied. This large section of the Sudanese society who used to be politically active lost interest in the whole political process and turned to find individual solutions through the miracles (*karamat*) and the blessing they get with *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai for whom he recite *al Fatiha*.

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<sup>240</sup> Cited in Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Quoted in Valeri J. Hoffman, "Eating and Fasting for God in Sufi Tradition:", Journal of the American Academy of Religion, Vol.63, No.3, Autumn 1995, p.466.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., p.477.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.,



## Chapter Three

### The Identity Crisis of The Sudanese Middle Class

#### 3.1 Introduction

The middle class in Sudan could be defined as social strata that appeared with the development of the colonial and post-colonial state. According to Sid Ahmed, they are new forces who made their first ever appearance in connection with the colonial innovative structure like the intelligentsia (or '*effendiyya*') who appeared in connection with the colonial educational, administrative systems and urban workers who appeared in association with the colonial agricultural and industrial ventures. The forces that existed prior to the Condominium era, such as the religious and tribal leaders, the merchants (traders), peasants and pastoralists, were subjected to significant influences and transformations.<sup>244</sup>

The patterns through which those forces coped with and reacted to their new positions and the circumstances surrounding them differed. The 'traditional elite' religious and tribal leaders- were able both to retain the loyalty of their followers and benefit from the new opportunities of investment created by the colonial order. Thus, they were the pioneers in "modern" agricultural, commercial and ultimately, industrial investment. Accordingly, they formed the core of the economic elite that emerged under the Condominium regime. Other groups that joined this emergent economic elite were the upper strata of the merchants who entered new fields of investment that fell outside traditional commercial activity such as pump schemes, mechanized farming and manufacturing.<sup>245</sup>

The essence of education (during colonialism) and approaches of study were not intended to produce thinkers, but to produce state-employees for the new executive power. The highest posts were for the British, the middle posts were for the Greeks and the lowest posts were for the Sudanese. The role of educated Sudanese was restricted to marginal administrative duties, as the British depended in their administration on the traditional leaders in political administration under "Native Administration" system. On the other hand, the educated Sudanese were predominantly sons of traditional tribal native administrators and sons of upper merchants.

#### 3.2 Definition, Characteristics and the formation of the Sudanese Middle class

The middle class is a transitional stage in the life of nations. It is a changing stratum in changing circumstances and therefore has no static definition. Experience shows that the middle class might be composed of: 1) the educated strata, 2) the intellectuals, 3) employees in the state bureaucracy, 4) teachers and 5) the army, in accordance to the historical experience of nation formation.

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<sup>244</sup> Abdel Salam Sidahmed, *Politics and Islam in Contemporary Sudan*, Curzon, London, 1997, p.18.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., p.19

The 'effendiyya' (educated group) is the word that firstly is used to connote the term middle class up to 1924. In a study of the Egyptian *effendiyya*, it is found that the term 'affendi' is originally of Greek origin, meaning 'master seigneur' was used by the Ottomans as the title of address for various dignitaries and important state functionaries. In 19<sup>th</sup> century Egypt, the title 'effendi' took on a specific meaning that was originally linked to the building of a modern state, and related to both the emergence of modern bureaucracy as well as to the secular character of its elite.<sup>246</sup>

There are specific characteristics of the 'effendiyya':

1-It is of transitional stage: It is not only the changing meaning and social usage of the term that poses a problem in conceptualizing the *effendi*. A related problem is that the *effendis* constantly tend to overlap with other social categories such as merchants, rural middle classes, the professionals or the bureaucrats. It can be said that the *effendis* are always in the process of becoming something else in order to achieve better status.

2-The word 'effendi' connotes cultural term: The concept 'effendi' is not a class situation but a cultural term, and one that is related to social mobility, but more importantly, to passages from non-modernity to modernity in its many forms.<sup>247</sup> 'affendis' were distinguished not only by their jobs, but also, by their specific "culture": their western manners, signified by their 'European' dress in the first instance, and their distinct perspective on the society in which they lived.<sup>248</sup>

3- heterogeneous group- 'Effendis' were a heterogeneous group. They were united by the way in which they distinguished themselves culturally from the rest of the urban population, and from their often "traditional" fathers. They practice new modes of socialization and of consumption and new forms of identity were spreading among them.<sup>249</sup>

4-Feeling of frustration: According to Luci: "The feelings of frustration generated among the educated urban Egyptians are again described on the pages of al-Muwailihi's *Hadith Ibn Hisham*,

"The British earn huge salaries and have extreme authority, they have grabbed the reins of power and are keeping us shut out. The gates to promotion are shut in our faces, and the where withal of progress is cut off".<sup>250</sup>

How did the emergent social forces react to the presence and continuity of the colonial rule? Again, response differed with the different forces in question. At an impressionist level it may be observed that some forces assumed a collaborative attitude to the colonial state, while others adopted a rejectionist one. Certain groups took to

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<sup>246</sup> Lucie Ryzova, "Egyptian Modernity through the "New Effendiyya": Social and Cultural Construction of the Middle Class in Egypt under the Monarchy", in Arthur Goldschmidt, Amy J. Johnson, Barak A. Salmoni (eds.), *Re-Envisioning Egypt 1919-1952*. The American University in Cairo Press, Cairo, 2005, p.127.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid, p. 126.

<sup>250</sup> Quoted in Ibid, p.130.

collective and modern methods of organization and mobilization, others followed traditional and personified channels, and so forth.<sup>251</sup>

The frustration among Sudanese 'effendiyyas' is caused by two factors a) frustration of equal salaries as the case with the British officials and b) an increasing gap between western education and the backward realities of the society. In the book of "*Mawt Donia*" or "death of a life", it is implied the death of the social strata of the intelligentsia that suffered severe contradictions between its rural origin and the urban realities and modern education.<sup>252</sup>

The intelligentsia or the "*effendiyya*" faced a crisis of identity that is either to adopt western culture or the Islamic culture. Unlike during the Mahdiyya, where religious values were dominating and formed the motive behind the revolution, the nationalist movement led by the intelligentsia lacked value motive. The Mahdist legacy was a dual one: a revolution and liberation heritage embroiled in religious discourse and legitimation; and a state construction punctuated by sharp divisions, disputes and power struggles which cultivated historic enmities. This two-fold legacy was bound to influence both the policies of the British administration and the politics of the nationalist movement.<sup>253</sup>

The Sudanese intelligentsia (*effendiyya*) made this social stratum lacks mass influence. This fact represents one of the weaknesses of the *effendiyya* intellectual movement. Other weaknesses of the Sudanese middle class could be summarized as follows: a) The middle class represents meager percentage of the society. b) The middle class is not representative of the Sudanese nation. c) Educated elites were centered in urban north-Khartoum-Blue Nile and Northern regions. d) The *effendiyya* are formed within the context of regional disparities. They are meager among non-Arabs-African tribes. E) Dependence on state for their living, that restricts their ability of mobilization and being critical against the state.

According to Sid Ahmed, the intelligentsia or "The *effendiyya*" is not a homogeneous group, the modern elite-the intelligentsia-occupied a highly respectable place as literate members in a virtually illiterate society. More specifically, some of their strata-the senior civil servants, army officers and professionals-were eventually able to join the economic elite mainly through utilization of their prestigious and strategic positions. However, the majority of both tenant farmers and urban workers were not in a similar advantageous position. Their modest earnings were often strained by the additional demands imposed on them by government taxes and the growing requirements of a changing society.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Haydar Ibrahim, "Tatawr Al Intelligentisa al Sudaniyya" in *Fadha al Fajia', Sinaa't al Faqr wa Al Jou' fi Al Sudan, Tatawr Al Intelligensia al Sudaniyya* Kitabat Sudaniyya, Centre of Sudanese Studies, Al Rabat, 1992, p.71.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid., p.21.

<sup>254</sup> Abdel Salam Sidahmed, opcit., p.19.

### 3.3 Identity Crisis of the Sudanese Middle Class

Crisis of the middle class shown in the above section is rooted in the early years of colonialism. Older approaches of studying colonialism emphasize the shaping of imperial policies in the metropole and concentrate on the rulers' actions in the colonies. Important newer scholarship gives attention to how the ruled participated in imperial administration. Researchers such as Peter Woodward and Heather Sharkey provide a major addition to this new approach in their thorough analysis of the activities and careers of the Sudanese who worked in the British backed government that ruled Sudan from 1898 until 1955. It is assumed that the empire "worked on the ground because it relied on vast support staffs... who handled the day-to-day tasks of colonialism".<sup>255</sup>

The educated Sudanese, suffered a paradoxical situation of being part and parcel of colonialism and at the same time it is the class that have to take the burden of decolonization. Therefore from the start the educated Sudanese as the core of the middle class in early colonial development grow with inbuilt contradictions, a complex relationship between collaboration and opposition.<sup>256</sup> Sharkey introduced a new definition of "colonialists intimate enemies" to describe the paradoxical situation of the educated Sudanese. She stated that,

"The extensive involvement of Sudanese in the colonial regime created a situation in which these Sudanese became "colonialism's intimate enemies, making colonial rule a reality while hoping to see it undone".<sup>257</sup>

In Sudan and many Islamic countries, the formation of national states has led to a marked secularization of public life. Political identity has been defined in national terms. Islam has been disestablished and Islamic religious associate proscribed in many countries. Secular educational and judicial institutions and legal codes have replaced Islamic education and Islamic justice.<sup>258</sup> To address the regime's need for clerks, accountants, teachers, engineers, and *qadis* (Muslim courts judges), the British authorities founded Gordon Memorial College in 1902. British administration wanted Gordon College to be an elite institution along the lines of a British public schools a kind of "Eton of the Sudan" or "Winchester by the Nile". And so, in recruiting for the school, authorities favored young men of high-status backgrounds. Above all, they enrolled students from Arabic-speaking, Muslim families that claimed Arab genealogies and hailed from the central riverain North. Gordon College offered important advantages that these other sites of learning did not have. It provided direct access to jobs in colonial government, often at the highest level open to Northern Sudanese. It also gave its students a strong literary education in both Arabic and English, and introduced new communications technologies such as typing and printing in classrooms and in extracurricular contexts. Finally the college promoted an ethos of self-sufficiency and

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<sup>255</sup> Heather J. Sharkey, Living with Colonialism: Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, University of California Press, 2003, p.1.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., p.1

<sup>258</sup> Ira M. Lapidus, "State and Religion in Islamic Societies", Past and Present, No.151, May 1996, p.4.

group spirit, on playing fields and in lecture rooms alike. The result was a set of graduates who possessed both the know how and confidence to articulate and disseminate nationalist ideologies.<sup>259</sup>

Sharkey argued that by offering salaried jobs and the hope of promotion in return for work well done, the British neutralized opposition among the newly educated-Middle Eastern *effendis*, Indian *babus*, and African “Europeanized natives”. However this stake in the colonial system grew less satisfying with time. Increasingly frustrated by patterns of exclusion that cast them as social inferiors vis-à-vis Britons and restricted their ascent within the bureaucratic system, intellectuals began to develop nationalist ideologies that rested on clear anti-colonial foundations. In this way, the nationalist challenge to colonialism arose from within the colonial system and swelled to fill the borders that empire had imposed.<sup>260</sup> This feeling of unjust towards colonial foundation was transformed into a rebellion in what is known as 1924 Revolution.

The most remarkable national movement that the intelligentsia led was the movement of White Flag League in 1924. The British were wary of the small but vocal urban educated class, which was influenced by Egyptian nationalism in the early 1920s and pressed the government to place Sudanese citizens in responsible administrative positions as well as to move toward self-rule. The league was founded by Ali Abd al-Latif, an Egyptian-born Muslim whose Dinka parents were originally slaves. The members of the league, enthusiastic about the Egyptian revolution of 1919 and Egypt’s gaining nominal independence in 1922, called for political unity of the Nile Valley and encouraged anti-British demonstrations in Sudanese towns. The movement attracted Arab and Dinka officers, government clerks, artisans, and workers. Some workers were employed by the railway headquarters at Atbara, which was the first industrial complex in the country. Although the league’s members were few in number, they included persons from the new urban lower-middle class that opposed the traditional tribal and sectarian elites.<sup>261</sup>

The violent confrontation of November 1924 between the Sudanese rebel forces and the British had brought the revolt to an end. Its leaders either died in battle, executed or imprisoned. Some were sent into exile. The main cause of the revolt’s failure was the lack of mass support. The membership and supporters of the White Flag League were confined only to some urban centres and a few groups of the intelligentsia. The religious leaders, who were from the outset opposed to the movement, ‘succeeded in neutralizing their followers and even in making them hostile to the league’.

The crisis of the educated class was reflected in the literacy committees and groups established after the failure of 1924 “revolution”. Self-identification of the Sudanese (Africans or Arabs) was a dividing factor of the Sudanese educated group. In other words the problem of self-identification as a “bridge” of two cultures. The Sudan is unique among African countries and differs from even those ‘Sudanic’ states which it resembles most: it is at one and the same time both ‘African’ and ‘Arab’, the combination being present-especially in the six northern provinces-to a degree and in a manner which are not paralleled in any other country. All Sudanic states share the attribute, frequently associated with the Nilotic Sudan, for forming a bridge between what are usually referred

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<sup>259</sup> Ibid., pp. 7-8.

<sup>260</sup> Sharkey, op.cit., p.3

<sup>261</sup> Ann Mosley Lesch,, The Sudan-Contested National Identities, Indiana University Press, 1998, p.29.

to as 'Arabs' or North African and 'Black' or Sub-Saharan Africa and, as a rule experience tensions between their northern regions-which are predominantly Islamic in character and outlook-and their southern, mainly pagan or Christian regions. But none of them can be said to constitute an Arab-African entity in the same sense or to the same extent as the Sudan.<sup>262</sup>

Division among the first Sudanese educated strata on the perception of nationalism was one of the basic factors that led latter to identity crisis. Although Sudanese nationalists were united in their rejection of policies such as native administration and the 'Southern Policy', because they fed separatist particularism instead of Sudanese nationalism, they could not help being themselves divided over the chief question they had to face up to the end of the Anglo-Egyptian regime in 1955, namely the future of the Sudan. One camp, fearful of Egyptian domination over the Sudan and consisting mainly of Mahdist elements, stood for the independence of the country by means of cooperation with Britain as against Egypt. The other consisted in the main of non-Mahdist elements and was supported, for the most part, by the Khatmiyya (who never forgot the Mahdiyya and, at least until the early 1950s, were fearful that their opponents were intent on imposing a Mahdist monarchy in the Sudan). This camp stood for the 'Unity of the Nile Valley', either as an end in itself, or as a political lever against the Mahdist on the one hand and the British of the other, the majority, including Khatmiyya, ultimately revealed the latter as their aim.<sup>263</sup> Sudan question was behind the polarization of nationalist sentiment. The Sudan question and the accompanying polarization of nationalist sentiment had profound repercussions on subsequent developments in the country. Not only had these issues undermined the solidarity of the Congress and sowed the seeds of mutual distrust among the nationalists themselves; worse still, they accentuated sectarian rivalry and involvement in the nationalist struggle.<sup>264</sup>

Unionists such as *Shaikh* Muhammad Sa'id al 'Abbasi and 'Abdullah 'Abd al-Rahman, strongly opposed the Mahdists when, the later as the champions of Independence, they began advocating Sudanese nationalism (mainly through *Hadarat al-Sudan*, the first Sudanese political newspaper, from June 1920 onwards) and propagating the motto, 'The Sudan for the Sudanese', as opposed to 'Unity of the Nile Valley under the Egyptian crown'. As might be expected, the opposition was chiefly couched in terms of traditional Islamism and Arabism, not merely out of inertia or force of habit, but because, politically speaking, the unionists correctly suspected that Sudanese nationalism was, at any rate at that stage and in that form, at least partly inspired by the British: not because they genuinely believed that the Sudan should be for the Sudanese, but in order to keep the Egyptians out of the Sudan and thus be better able to keep the Sudan under British control. By emphasizing Islamism and Arabism as opposed to Sudanese nationalism they were, furthermore, positively contributing to the strengthening of bonds which were common to Egypt and the Sudan.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Muddathir 'Abd Al-Rahim, "Arabism, Africanism and Self-Identification in the Sudan", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 8, no.2, July 1970, p.233

<sup>263</sup> Muddathir 'Abd Al-Rahim, op.cit., p.242.

<sup>264</sup> Alexander Solon Gudsi, "The Rise of Political Parties in The Sudan 1936-1945", unpublished Ph.D dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, no date, p.270.

<sup>265</sup> Muddathir 'Abd Al-Rahim, opcit., p.245.

Mudathir Abdel Rahim went further to state that, it was natural that the first coherent statement on the nature of Sudanese nationalism should have been made by a champion of Independence who was of Mahdist background but, having studied at Gordon College in the early 1920s-a time of intense nationalist activity both in Egypt and the Sudan-had the incentive and the training as well as the ability to begin such undertaking. Having discussed the subjects in public lectures at the Graduates' Club in Omdurman and in articles which were published in *al-Fajr*, the principal Sudanese journal of 1930s, Muhammad Ahmad Mahjoub concluded that Sudanese nationalism must be firmly based on Islam, Arabic culture, and African soil and traditions, and that it should be open to and freely interact with international currents of thought. Sudanese culture, he said, would have close friendly relations with the neighbouring Egyptian culture, but would be independent of it, it would retain its own distinct character, but would learn from the culture and thought of all other nations, both ancient and modern. On the subjects of the goals and character of the literary movement in the Sudan, he wrote in 1941,

“The objective towards which the literary movement in this country should be directed is to establish an Islamic culture supported and enriched by European thought and aimed at developing a truly national literature which derives its character and its inspiration from the character and traditions of the people of this country, its deserts and jungles, its bright skies and fertile valleys...By giving an increasingly more prominent place to political studies of a kind more directly concerned with our problems and ambitions, this movement should then be transformed from a cultural to a political movement whose final goal should be the achievement of the political, social, and cultural independence of this country.”<sup>266</sup>

The above quotation contradicted practical realities of the Sudanese nationalist movement. It is clear that the African past of the Sudanese was not regarded as an object of glorification or seen as a source of self-gratification by politically conscious Sudanese. Their non-Islamic present, like their pre-Islamic past, was for them a part of the *Jahiliya*, the ‘Age of Ignorance’ or ‘World of Darkness’, and they could not therefore identify themselves with either.<sup>267</sup>

The first person to consider Sudan’s unique identity in the press was a little-known poet and sub-*ma’mur* (district official) named Hamza al-Malik Tambal (1897-1951). In a series of essays published in *Hadarat al-Sudan* in 1927, Tambal posited the existence- or possible existence-of a distinct “Sudanese” (*Sudani*) Arabic literature and urged his peers to infuse their poems and other writings with “Sudanese” themes, settings and sentiments. Tambal’s essays caused a stir, making the first self-conscious use of “Sudanese” as epithet for national identity. An unlikely champion of the Arabic literature of Sudanese-ness, Tambal was born in Aswan, Egypt, to a family from Argo-Island in

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<sup>266</sup> The quotation is cited in Muddathir ‘Abd Al Rahim, op.cit., p.246. from: *al-Haraka al-Fikriyya fil-Sudan ila ain*, (Khartoum, 1941).

<sup>267</sup> Ibid. p.244

Dongola Province, Sudan, and grew up speaking Nubian, not Arabic, as his first language. Tambal thus embodied the fluidity of “Sudanese and “Egyptian” identity in this period, where many maintained family ties on both sides of the Sudan-Egyptian border, without questioning their consequences for social identity. This call for a “Sudanese” literature offended some *Hadarat al Sudan* readers, most of whom, as members of the educated northern elite, regarded themselves as “Arabs”. By calling for a “Sudanese” Arabic literature, Tambal redefined a term of social stigma as a marker of national pride. Young nationalists slowly accepted his argument and embraced the term *Sudani* for their nationalism, though some elders were still cringing at its usage as late as Independence in 1956. The educated elite did preserve some distinctions of social status, however, by employing *Sudaniyyin* (Sudanese) as the nationalist plural, and reserving *sud* to imply servile or southern origins.<sup>268</sup> However the appearance of the southerners in the Sudanese politics brought to the surface the contradictions of the Sudanese educated class. Division among the educated class took place on either they adopt African identity or Arab identity.

Following the fatal suppression of the 1924 uprising a period of decadence and political stagnation ensued. The intelligentsia, who were the prime movers of the 1924 events, resigned in disappointment and apprehension and busied themselves with their ‘graduates’ clubs and literary activities (the graduate club was founded in 1918 in Omdurman). The 1930s, however, brought some changes to this gloomy atmosphere. In 1931 a reduction of salaries especially for the fresh graduates of the College was met by immediate rejection from the students who went on a strike. The significance of this event is that it had restated the confidence of the intelligentsia in themselves and their possibility of collective action.<sup>269</sup>

Approaches to gain Sudan Independence paved the way to the growing of Sudanese nationalism. During the 1930s, nationalists elements formed study groups in Khartoum and Omdurman to discuss approaches to gaining Sudanese independence. Cultural and literary societies, as in other colonial states, flourished as avenues of legal political expression, and nationalistic poems frequently found their way into daily newspapers in Khartoum. Nationalism was almost exclusively expressed during this period by the few educated and urbanized Sudanese, many of them graduates of Gordon College or one of the few technical and high schools in the cities, who formed part of the colonial administration or of the miniscule commercial bourgeoisie. They coalesced as a political group for the first time when called upon in 1931 to mediate a strike by Gordon College students protesting grossly severe pay cuts given to Sudanese administrators by the Sudan government.<sup>270</sup>

Following local and international developments, the Graduates’ Congress formed the foundation of the Sudanese nationalist movement. The Graduates’ General Conference was held at the Sudan Schools’ Club in Omurman on 12 February 1938, with 1180 graduates participating in the deliberations. An introductory speech was delivered

<sup>268</sup> Heather J.Sharkey, “ A Century in Print: Arabic Journalism and Nationalism in Sudan, 1899-1999”, *International Journal of Middle East*, Vol.31, No.4, November 1999, P.537.

<sup>269</sup> Carole Collins, “Colonialism and Class Struggle in Sudan”, *Middle East Report (MERIP)*, No.46, April 1976, p. 7.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.



by Isma'il al-Azhari, the President of the Preparatory Committee, in which he described the origins and development of the idea of the Congress, and expounded its objectives and the results which should be expected. The aims of the Congress, he maintained, were to formulate and express a collective point of view representing graduate opinion; to promote a national consciousness by combating partisanship and tribalism; and to lay the foundation of a sound national life by carrying out a programme of social reform.<sup>271</sup>

The establishment of the Graduates' General Congress in 1938 was facilitated by a number of factors. First, central government authorities had realized that tribal organization in Sudan was weakened beyond repair and therefore the possibility of evolving a system of genuine local self-government was no longer realistic.<sup>272</sup> According to Warburg, this did not imply a complete dismissal of tribal leadership, but rather an attempt to look for a possible alternative among the educated class. Secondly, the threat of war created a situation in Sudan in which the support of every segment of the population was essential to the government, not least the intelligentsia, which was by definition more open to hostile anti-colonialist propaganda. Thirdly, the emergence of Sayyid Abd-al Rahman al -Mahdi and the Ansar as a political force and his growing influence on the intelligentsia suggested that an attempt to create an alternative, non-sectarian, basis for the latter's loyalty could be useful. Fourthly, the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 had stirred public opinion in Sudan to no longer be relied upon to remain passive. Finally, the appointment of Sir Douglas Newbold as Deputy civil Secretary in 1938 and as Civil Secretary in the following year was of great significance. For the first time the government was sympathetic to the educated class and tried to understand its aspirations. Newbold's predecessors in office were influenced by Wingate's and Stack's view about Sudan, which were largely formed before the First World War and influenced by the Anglo-Indian school. They carried their preference for the honest and primitive tribal population over the town or *effendi* into the 1930s.<sup>273</sup>

It is argued that the neo-Mahdist activities of Sayyid Abd al-Rahman Al-Mahdi offended the sensitivities of the modernist and secular sections of the intelligentsia. Accordingly *Al Fajr* in an editorial of an issue published in August 1936, argued that the Government could ascertain the needs and demands of the people only through the enlightened class. The editorial went on to call once again for the formation of a body which "will be given authority by the enlightened class to speak for them, to express their hope and ideals and to defend their case socially and politically. Such a body must gain the support of all the graduates or at least the majority. ...And here we face a difficulty: How will this body be organized and of whom will it consist? The editorial then made, for the first time, an explicit call for a graduates' general conference, to be organized at the Graduates' Club in Omdurman.<sup>274</sup>

From the start the paradoxical nature of the Sudanese nationalist movement was very clear at the meetings of the Graduates Congress. In a meeting of the Graduates' Congress, the principal speakers were 'Abd al-Magid Ahmad and Ahmad Muhammad

<sup>271</sup> Alexander Solon Gudsi, op.cit, pp.76-77.

<sup>272</sup> Gabriel Warburg, *Islam, Sectarianism and Politics in Sudan Since The Mahdiyya*, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003, p.110.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> Alexander Solon Gudsi, "The rise of Political Parties in The Sudan 1936-1946", an unpublished Ph.D dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, no date, pp.36-37.

Khayr, two influential nationalists of opposite political dispositions, the former a moderate and the latter a militant. Ahmad Khayr denounced the tendency among some graduates to make of the Congress “a mere advisory body to beg and entreat the Government” and demanded instead “a Congress to represent Sudanese nationalism, on the model of the Wafd and the National Assembly of Ankara. Muhammad Ahmad Mahjoub, irritated by the thought that the Congress might act as a “begging body” condemned such a tendency in somewhat strong language. There was not question, he said, of begging the government for favours. The Congress must “demand” the national rights of the Sudanese, and if the government refused to allow its officials to demand such right, ten or fifteen of the graduate class could easily be found who would be prepared to resign from government service.”<sup>275</sup> From here it is quite clear the contradiction of the graduates who led the nationalist movement i.e. being part of the colonial system and at the same time working to de-colonize Sudan. In addition to this point, the leaders of the nationalist movement were not representing the whole Sudan. It was clear that sovereignty and freedom were the primary objectives of the nationalists. The issue was freedom and not what would happen thereafter in economic terms. That is why the political parties at the time did not have detailed action-oriented proposals on economic development, women, the south and so forth.<sup>276</sup>

In addition to depriving the educated Sudanese from the continuity of the value system after the fall down of the Mahdist state, this strata grows out of the complexities of the Condominium rule. According to Warburg the main sequences of colonialism are the sectarian rule and the weak Sudanese intelligentsia. Warburg stated that:

“It is derived from a conviction that ‘the evils of modernization’ would ruin the Sudan as they had ruined India, Egypt and other dependencies. Combined with the traditional British romantic attachment to the life and qualities of the rural, preferably nomadic, tribesman, and the financial advantages of the system, the road towards tribal Indirect Rule was clearly paved. But, as it is rightly claimed by Daly, because of detribalization it was never fully implemented-except in Darfur and the South-‘and it was they which suffered most from the policy...What began as a hopeful or, at any rate, promising line of approach, became a recipe for confusion and stagnation...Diehards of Indirect Rule, such as Reginald Davies, opposed even the most symbolic move to incorporate educated Sudanese in their own administration, thereby strengthening the role of the traditional, primarily sectarian, forces even further.”<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid, p.65.

<sup>276</sup> Mohamed Omer Beshir, “The Sudan’s Twenty Five Years of Independence: The Continuing Search for System”, Bulletin of British Society for Middle Eastern Studies, Vol.9, No.2., 1982, p. 114.

<sup>277</sup> Gabriel R. Warburg, “The Condominium Revisited: The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1934-1956: A Review Article”, Bulletin of The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol. 56, No.1, 1993, p.3.

The education of the Sudanese middle class was handicapped by the administrative necessities. By 1935, it became clear that Indirect Rule was being phased out, except in the South and Darfur which were too poor to afford any alternative. Daly mentions corruption and inefficiency as two of the main arguments against Indirect Rule. However, it was the Second World War which forced the government to employ more Sudanese in posts previously held by British and thus created an outlet for young graduates who would otherwise have remained unemployed. It also stimulated discussion about the role of the Sudanese in governing their own country. Sir Douglas Newbold, who had encouraged the foundation of the Graduates' Congress in 1938, led the new policy of introducing Sudanese to such positions as assistant district commissioner and to senior positions in the civil-secretary's office.<sup>278</sup> The emergence of local government, where positions for educated Sudanese became available, was one natural result. This was strengthened by the reluctant acceptance of planned Sudanization, in April 1946, aimed at appeasing the Sudanese 'in order to prevent Egyptian infiltration'. However, as late as 1952 there was no single Sudanese governor or deputy governor and only 9 out of 57 district commissioners were Sudanese.<sup>279</sup> Taking the case of Sudanese periodicals of that period, from 1918 until 1952 the Sudan Notes and Records (SNR) was the first and only regularly-published journal in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. The editorial policy of SNR in the 1920s favoured notables and tribal chiefs rather than the intelligentsia, by allotting space in this periodical to articles written by Sudanese *Shaikhs*, a phenomenon occurring at a time when the policy of Indirect rule figured most prominently in the calculation of the administration. In the late 1930s, the administration courted the Sudanese educated class, offering them greater opportunities in the civil service and higher education abroad.<sup>280</sup>

The introduction of the sectarian politics to the Sudanese intelligentsia took place as early as the Graduates Congress. This sectarian politics took the shape of political rivalry between the two *Sayyids* and it affected the Graduates Congress as well the formation of the Sudanese political parties. As said above, the Graduates Congress was a reaction to the political ambitions of *Sayyid* Abdel Rahman Al Mahdi. The following are the reasons for the decline in the Ansar's popularity among the graduates that should also be considered. First, many of the intelligentsia feared and opposed the renewed emphasis on tribal leaders, which they felt was implied by the creation of the Northern Sudan Advisory Council in May 1944. While the council enjoyed the full backing of *Sayyid* 'Abd al-Rahman, *Sayyid* 'Ali viewed it with a suspicion similar to that of the bulk of the Graduates, because the Ansar and the tribal leaders enjoyed a majority among its members. Hence, many graduates who were not necessarily Khatmiyya followers found themselves on the latter's side in the 1944 elections. In doing so they expressed their disapproval of the government and their anti-Ansar feelings. Secondly, the intelligentsia had by and large, favoured some connections with Egypt, primarily as an ally against prolonged British domination. In many cases, fear of an Ansar-dominated monarchy under *Sayyid* 'Abd al-Rahman gave an added impetus to some form of alliance with Egypt and hence to the support of al-Ashiqqa. Finally, the death of *Sayyid* 'Abd al-

<sup>278</sup> Gabriel Warburd, *The Condominium Revisited* Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

<sup>280</sup> Bushra Hamad, "Sudan Notes and Records and Sudanese Nationalism", *History in Africa*, Vol. 22, 1995, P.239

Rahaman's brother, whose funeral coincided with the Congress elections, kept many of the leading Ansar fully occupied, thus indirectly helping the Ashiqqa-Khatmiyya coalition. The collaboration between an important section of the intelligentsia and Sayyid 'Ali al Mirghani can therefore be described as a marriage of convenience, for which both partners benefited. Sayyid 'Ali stated quite openly, in private conversations with the Commissioner of Police, that he had no interest in or political affinity with al-Ashiqqa and that his sole motive was to prevent Sayyid Sir 'Abdel Rahman from capturing the Congress as had already captured the Advisory council.<sup>281</sup>

The demoralization of the Sudanese intelligentsia caused by splits, fragmentation and divisions was aggravated during the period of the Graduates Congress and continued since then. In fact the Congress, though formally still in existence, ceased to play any role in Sudanese society or politics from 1946 onward. Al-Umma and al-Ashiqqa became the dominant organizations in the political arena, with the two Sayyids continuing to pull the strings.<sup>282</sup>

It is known that colonial suppression of genuine nationalism created the space for an 'incipient or embryonic bourgeoisie' to dominate the process of decolonization and form alliances with traditional tribal and *tariqa* leaders. At Independence this alliance prevented any structural change in either the polity or the economy since the levers of power were concentrated in the hands of sectarian elites. Consequently, there was no distribution of the wealth of the country, either between or within regions, and over time resource extraction benefited the elite establishments to the detriment of the general population, including regional groups.<sup>283</sup>

The participation of the southerners in Sudanese politics complicated the contradictions of the Sudanese educated class. In December 1955 southern leaders were talked into voting for an independent united Sudan only after solemn promises by northern politicians that federalism, granting equality to Christianity and English with Islam and Arabic, would be seriously considered by the constitutional subcommittee. However, in December 1957 southern demands for regional autonomy were rejected out of hand by the northern Muslim majority as an expansive façade. It was on the application of regional autonomy that the southerners fought the February 1958 elections. But while the south overwhelmingly supported these demands, the Umma-dominated government forced a new constitution on the Constituent Assembly. Fear of Islamization and Arabization was thus the main reason for the Southerners boycott of assembly from June 1958.<sup>284</sup>

Therefore the characteristics of the Sudanese middle class before Independence are as follows: a) The dominance of the two cultural groups, b) Sectarianism, c) Exclusion of southerners, westerners and easterners because of the small number of educated from these regions, d) Political parties without programmes for socio-economic change, e) Ideological groups and other new forces.

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<sup>281</sup> Ibid, p.122.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid. p.124.

<sup>283</sup> Endre Stainsen and Micheal Kevane, Kordofan Invaded: Peripheral Incorporation and Social Transformation in Islamic Africa, Brill, 1998, p.8.

<sup>284</sup> Gabriel R. Warburg, "Islam and State in Numayri's Sudan", Journal of The International African Institute, Vol. 55, no. 4, 1985, p.403-404.

When the Sudan became independent in 1956 the major features of its economic and political life were as follows:

- a) A parliamentary system similar in form only to the Westminster model.
- b) A struggle for power in which the major contenders were the two sects in alliance with the two groups among the intelligentsia. The latter, despite their divided allegiances shared a commitment to modernization, rule of law and democracy.
- c) A relatively small class of merchants. Its growth had been hampered by the privileged position and dominance enjoyed by the nationals of the foreign colonialist in addition to the Greeks and Syrians over the small sector of modern economy.
- d) A small civil service-not exceeding 10,000, which has been described as efficient. Its education and training had been geared to junior administrative, executive positions and not for a leadership role. The scarcity of professional and managerial skills among them limited their capacities to lead, plan and deal satisfactorily with the new issues arising.
- e) A military establishment, not to be found, perhaps, in any other African country, possessing the attributes of an independent national army.
- f) A sharp division between north and south arising from geography, history and further deepened by colonial policy.
- g) The cultural divisions, the sectarian policy and inherited fears were manipulated by the competing Condominium powers and by the two sects and their allies.
- h) An underdeveloped economy with a per capita income estimated at \$70-90. Although fifty seven years of the British rule brought enormous technical progress is nevertheless true that progress in the Sudan failed to keep pace with that in the rest of the world.<sup>285</sup>

Sharkey went further to analyze the nature of the leaders of nationalist movement in Sudan, she stated that:

“Educational policies, here as in other parts of the British Empire, fostered uneven development among regions and social groups. Finally, by privileging Arabic-speaking, northern riverain Muslims for the most advanced colonial education available, the Sudan’s educational policies produced an ethnically specific nationalist elite. This specificity helped to confirm patterns of exclusionary ethnic politics in the postcolonial era.”<sup>286</sup>

The nationalist movement grew out of this paradoxical situation, which resulted in the emergence of a grouping of educated local people who came to identify themselves as “Sudanese”. This newly created *strata* began to form a new Sudanese identity that could, and did, provide the foundation for nationalism.<sup>287</sup> Identity crisis of the educated Sudanese rose from adopting colonial boundaries, but with applying riverain culture.

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<sup>285</sup> Mohamed Omer Beshir, op.cit., pp.116-117.

<sup>286</sup> Sharkey, op.cit., p.9.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.,

Sharkey said that educated Northerners imagined a nation that took its territorial shape from the colony but its cultural shape from themselves. In writing and speech, they affirmed Arabic and Islam as pillars of the nation. Their nationalism, thus conceived, had serious limitations, especially for the country's non-Muslim or non-Arabic-speaking populations, who occupied the eastern, western and southern parts of the country. Consequently, after educated Northerners inherited control of the colonial territory at independence, regional power blocs began to form in the eastern and western regions among those who felt alienated or excluded from their agendas. These blocs included Muslim but non-Arabic –speaking communities like the Beja of the northern and the Fur of the far west.<sup>288</sup>

Two major schisms inside the educated Sudanese caused the identity crisis and affected the political development in Sudan. The first one is the division of the graduates into the main two sects the Ansar and the Khatmiyya. The later resulted schism among the educated Sudanese is the division among the educated Sudanese into secular and religious. These two main schisms were among the factors of the identity crisis among the educated Sudanese and affected severely the political development of the Sudan.

A Sudanese researcher, Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim, made a valuable study on the contrast between this educated strata that grew out of colonialism, which he nicknamed the “*effendiyya*” and the other social strata that graduated from religious institutions, studied *Shari’a* sciences and he gave them the title of the “turbans”.<sup>289</sup> Ibrahim stated that this dramatic severing of the colonizers and the colonized is reminiscent of Fanon’s characterization of the colonial condition, for being unswervingly divided into European and native quarters, as immortalized in his oft-quoted statement:

“The two zones are opposed, but not in service of a higher unity. Obedient to the rules of pure Aristotelian logic, they both followed the principle of reciprocal exclusivity. No conciliation is possible for of the two terms, one is superfluous.”<sup>290</sup>

Ibrahim added that beyond being a simple dialectic of domination and resistance, colonialism enticed the colonized to plump the depth of the “European embrace” with greater discrimination and subtlety. As a result, collaborators with colonialism, whom resistance discourse turned into pariahs, are in high demand in the emerging research on the enigma of colonialism. Asish Nandy even proposes that

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<sup>288</sup> Ibid. p.11.

<sup>289</sup> Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim, *Al Shari’a wa al-Hadatha: Mabath fi Gad al Asl we al Asr* (Sharia and Modernity: A Research in the Debate in Tradition and Modernity), Dar al Amin, Cairo, 2004, pp.137-138

Ibrahim borrowed the concept of Franz Fanon in his “Wretched of the Earth” in which Fanon stated that colonization divided the colonized countries into dual vacuums: first European dominating part with strength and dominant values, and the other dominated local people, helpless, with disappearing values. Ibrahim borrowed this model to explain the condition of the Sudanese educated class between the civilian European styled “*effendiyya*” and the native religious “turbans”. Ibid., p.18.

<sup>290</sup> Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim, “Tale of Two Sudanese Courts: Colonial Governmentality Revisited”, *African Studies Review*, Vol.4, No.1, April 1997, p.13

collaborators may prove, on close scrutiny, to be part of a moral and cognitive venture against oppression.<sup>291</sup>

Ibrahim argued that the British when came to rule the Sudan, made good use of their experience in India. In order to suppress the educated Sudanese and prevent them from working for Independence as took place in India; the British colonial state developed Indirect Rule in which the tribal leaders were dominant.<sup>292</sup> Further more, from the experience in India, the British got to the conclusion that the Islamic Law does not suit requirements of a modern state.<sup>293</sup> Putting into consideration that the Mahdist values were considered as nascent and crude civilization, a disruption in the Sudanese value system during the colonial state took place.

The attempts towards building Sudanese identity during the Mahdist state were completely aborted with the coming of the British. The Mahdist state had a profound effect on the level of popular identity. The Mahdi took concrete steps outlawing *tariqas*, standardizing dress and prayer, minting coins to consolidate an identity that took for granted the legitimacy of a central state. Later, at his successor's, the Khalifa orders, the state forced migration of large numbers of people (sometimes whole tribes) from the west to Omdurman where they settled in make-shift quarters. The high degree of mobility of both commoners and elites furthered the process of alienating men and women from their village orientation,<sup>294</sup> and thus creating an embryonic feeling of Sudanese identity.

The severe attitude towards the Mahdist heritage and values after the British invasion deprived the educated Sudanese who came out after a decade of the fall down of the Mahdist state, from a process of continuity in their culture, value system, and identity i.e. western education of the Sudanese started from negating the Mahdist era. The British thought that they had to start from zero, as there was no existing administrative system that deserve to start with for building modern "Sudan".<sup>295</sup> As a result, Civil and Penal codes were introduced to Sudan with the British –Indian version. These laws were completely imported and assumed that Sudan, before colonialism lacked justice, the thing that insult Sudanese severely, even in their moralities. Some of British-Indian penal codes were imposed on Sudanese and some of them were irrelevant to their Islamic ethics.<sup>296</sup> One of the examples of these laws imposed is the legal justification of prostitution houses.<sup>297</sup>

Abduallhi Ali Ibrahim took the case of the *Shari'a* courts as example of the dualism in which the Sudanese intellectuals lived. The policy of suppressing *Shari'a* courts and transferring their functions to native courts was strongly advocated and practiced by the 'romantic' administrators on the local and provisional levels who had gone absolutely 'native'. However, the central government had to apply the brake to breakneck speed with which those romantics wanted the suppression of the *Shari'a* courts to take place. The government, of course, did not want totally to alienate the educated class, who rightly saw the suppression of these courts as a further shrinkage in its constituency. Importantly, the government did not want to aggravate the Sufi and tribal

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<sup>291</sup> Ibid., p.14

<sup>292</sup> Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim, *Sharia and Modernity*, op.cit., p.22.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid, p.23

<sup>294</sup> Andre Stainsen and Micheal Kevane, op.cit., p.25.

<sup>295</sup> Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim, *Sharia and Modernity*, op.cit, p.24

<sup>296</sup> Ibid. p.25

<sup>297</sup> Hasan Nagila, *Malamiyah min Al Mugtama' Al Sudani*, Azza Publishing House, Khartoum, 2005, p.116.

leaders whose loyalty it had won not long before. The government policy of non-interference in Muslim religious affairs, to which the *Shari'a* courts owed their existence, had always been commended by these leaders. Between the “romantics of the administration” and its “pragmatists”, so to speak, the policy of *Shari'a* courts came to a sudden halt in the mid-thirties, leaving the relationships between them and the native courts unresolved. Ten years after the independence of the country, much of the power the native courts gained at the expense of the *Shari'a* courts was “pawned and circumscribed” by an Islamic alliance in the government.<sup>298</sup> Ibrahim stated that, the exclusion of the Islamic *Shari'a* from being one of the sources of the colonial law, created political and cultural crises all over the Independence era. He continued that this low status of the *Shari'a*, led later to the revenge of disturbing the Sudanese nation building in essence.<sup>299</sup>

Therefore, the Sudanese educated groups before Independence was divided between: a) Arabs and African identities (1924-1931), b) The sectarian politics or between the Ansar and the Khatmiyya (1938-1944). After Independence (1958-2008) the educated Sudanese were divided between: a) Secular, b) Religious. They were divided between advocates of western culture and those calling for Islamic and Arabic culture.

### 3.4 Limitations of the Sudanese Middle Class

From the start the educated strata has its inbuilt limitations. These limitations developed later after Independence to be a crisis.

Warburg stated that, it is against the background of British officialdom, leading a life of near-luxury in the mist of a primitive and poor population, that Sudanese nationalism evolved in the years 1934-40. Daly quotes from the diaries and private letters of young British officials to prove how far removed they were from the realities of the Sudanese with whose fate they had been entrusted. Furthermore, Daly illustrates that the Sudanese Political Service utter distrust of the young *effendiyya* whose education had given them an illusion of equality. The rural population, by contrary, was regarded with admiration, though only in its romantic version which often ignored the realities of life. If one adds to this the problems of status and segregation and the fact that members of the Sudan Political Service (SPS) viewed the ‘semi-educated man, the “*effendi*” class, with disdain, the background for anti-nationalist feelings among the British officialdom is hardly surprising. Daly quotes the governor of Darfur (1934-44) as stating:

“We have been able to limit education to the sons of chiefs....and can confidently look forward to keep the ruling class at the top of the educational tree for many years to come. Sons of *Shaikhs* were regarded as safe in comparison with the ‘sharper-witted sons of merchants’ who were therefore excluded from schools. This was without doubt a major shortcoming of the Sudan Political Service and of most other colonial services. There seems to have been an unbridgeable gulf between rulers and ruled. Language, culture, religion and class created barriers

<sup>298</sup> Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim, “Tale of Two Sudanese Courts..” op.cit., p.20.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid. p, 30



through which only a handful of Anglo-Sudanese tried to penetrate. Those who did were, as Daly points out, accused by fellow countrymen of 'going native', or even of betraying their own kind."<sup>300</sup>

The Independence of the Sudan coincided with lack of a charismatic leader with ideological platform, such as Nassir in Egypt. Azhari in the end was bi-product of sectarianism in one level and weak educated class on the other level. Also Independence of Sudan brought with it sectarianism as an important factor in Sudanese politics. The elusive Anglo-Egyptian Agreement was finally signed by President Najib and Anthony Eden in February 1953 on terms far worse, from a British point of view, than those agreed to by Bevin and Sidqi in 1946. Daly views the agreement as a milestone since it enabled the Sudanese to work in unanimity, 'which in turn brought thirty-five years of British policy crashing to a halt. It was certainly true that Robertson and most of his colleagues in the Sudan Political Service regarded the agreement as the end of all their efforts a 'complete victory for sectarianism.'<sup>301</sup>

One of the limitations of the Sudanese educated class is the inbuilt weakness resulted from depending on the two main Islamic sects in Sudan, the Ansar and the Khatmiyya. Warburg gives an excellent analysis of this phenomenon. Warburg stated that, the emergence of a young educated elite proved an area of keen competition between the two major Islamic movements. Both Sayyid 'Ali al and Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahman realized the importance of gaining the support of the educated class. They undermined the attempts of these so-called graduates to form their own independent political organization. Thus the Graduates' Congress, founded in 1938, was soon split between pro-Mahdist and pro-Khatmi supporters and the major political parties which emerged in the 1940s were under the patronage of one or the other of the two *Sayyeds*. Without this patronage it was impossible to gain large-scale support. This association of the educated elite with the two major religious organizations brought about a unique phenomenon with a far-reaching impact on future developments. On the one hand, it created a situation wherein political decisions depended on the leadership of the major religious factions. On the other hand, it forced those of the educated elite who were politically active but refused to join either of those two camps to form more radical groupings. They were based on the young intelligentsia and on a complete rejection of the 'sectarian' nature of the Sudanese politics. Neither of the radical parties and groupings ever achieved mass following, but with their highly educated and vocal leadership, succeeded in playing important roles on the sidelines of the Sudanese political scene and, at times, assumed a leading role as a result of their 'anti-sectarian position.'<sup>302</sup>

As a summary of the limitation of the Sudanese middle class, there are different internal factors that caused this limitation. They are as follows: a) The severe attitude of the British towards the Mahdist heritage deprived the educated class from cultural continuity, b) The division between the effendiyya and turbans which include the educated strata grew out of colonialism "effendiyya" and the other strata graduated from religious institutions who studied *Shari'a* sciences "the turbans", c) an illusion of equality

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<sup>300</sup> Quoted in Gabriel R. Warburg, "The Condominium Revisited", op.cit, p.4.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid. p.5.

<sup>302</sup> Gabriel R. Warburg, "Islam and State in Numayri's Sudan", op.cit, p.402.

between the British and Sudanese in salaries, promotion and official employments, d) Collaboration versus diggers of graves of colonialism. The educated strata was part of colonialism and at the same time they were leaders of decolonization process. In other words they were faithful to their official duties and at the same time conspire to get rid of colonialism, e) Sectarian influence as the educated strata were unable to forge independent alliances with the masses, f) The educated strata suffered weak economic muscles, status and segregation, lack of charismatic leader. All these factors led to the limitation of the Sudanese educated strata and the rise of an identity crisis.

### 3.5 Economic Crisis and the Sudanese Middle Class

Karl Wohlmuth argued that from the end of the 1970s, onwards one observes a decline of the industrial output and of industrial capacity use, a deterioration of overall growth performance and productivity, a high instability of agricultural output, a decreasing saving capacity and declining investment rates. One notes an increase of regional economic imbalances within the country, a worsening of income and wealth distribution especially in the rural areas, a fast decline of real wages and a high informal sector growth in the urban areas, a sharp decline of payments and of productivity in the public sector and the civil service, and a weakening of the overall capacity of the government to manage the economic crises.<sup>303</sup>

By the end of the 1970s, the economy was in crisis. As a result of an increase in government development expenditure, the budget deficit rose almost 100-fold. The balance of payments deficit increased from 2 to 5 % of GDP. Exports fell from 15% to 11% of GDP. The real growth rates started to decline. The inflow of capital from oil-rich Arab countries decreased, and as the grace periods of the loans reached their end, severe economic crisis emerged. After 1978, Arab oil-producing countries started to make fund disbursement to Sudan subject to IMF/World Bank conditions. From its adoption in 1971, Sudan's "open door" strategy for foreign investors did not lead to accelerated development. Money was borrowed recklessly, but much of it went into private consumption and greasing the wheels of Nimeiri's corrupt patrimonial system.<sup>304</sup>

In late 1970s, Sudan divided into two social strata: the opulent that had access to remitted hard currency and the rest, as the private wealth held by parts of the Sudanese expatriates and merchant class contrasted with the bankruptcy of the state. Studies, however, have revealed that evolution and manifestation of poverty in Sudan are increasing at alarming rates (in scale and severity) as the bulk of the Sudanese population has been engulfed in the absolute poverty, estimated between about 80% and 94% of the population. For example, for the years, 1968, 1978, 1986, 1993, the ratios of those below the nutrition-based absolute poverty lines were about 52%, 54%, 78% and 91% respectively.<sup>305</sup> In a study of the public sector employees in El Obied in 1997, it is found

<sup>303</sup> Karl Wohlmuth, "Alternative Economic Strategies for The Sudan", in Sharif Harir and Terje Tvedt (eds.), *Short-Cut to Decay: The Case of The Sudan*, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, 1994, p.204.

<sup>304</sup> African Rights, *Food and Power in Sudan: A Critique of Humanitarianism*, African Rights, May 1997, p.15.

<sup>305</sup> Ibrahim M.G.Sahal, "Public Sector Employees' Poverty-Coping Mechanism: The rolling of an empty ball, a Case From El-Obeid", unpublished paper submitted to Seminar on "Poverty in Sudan: towards an agenda for research", Khartoum, Sharqa Hall, 23-24 August 1997, p.2.

that the majority (96.7%) of the public sector salaried employees, are below the poverty line when measured against salary alone and that expenditure is about four times the salary.<sup>306</sup>

By the beginning of 1985, high hopes of development had turned into an economic nightmare. Agricultural and industrial production had declined (in per capita terms), external debt had risen about \$10 billion, even interest on the debt could only be paid by raising new loans, imports were three times the level of exports, massive food aid was needed to save large parts of the population from starvation. The 1984 grain harvest of 1.47 million tons fell some 1.9 million tons short of the country's needs; some of the major projects aimed at transforming the economy had been terminated and many existing industries had ceased production; and the value of the Sudanese pound against the US dollar had sunk to less than 10 percent of its 1983 value.<sup>307</sup> The drought, moreover, has seriously affected- in some cases totally eliminated-the livelihood of some 4.5 million Sudanese. Large areas of Darfur, Kordofan, and the Red Sea hills, where rain-fed agriculture and pastoralism previously supported a scattered population, have now become dislocate.<sup>308</sup>

The 1970s period also witnessed the beginning of the disintegration of the middle class.<sup>309</sup> The disintegration of the middle class in Sudan is caused by i) Liberalization of market, ii) Stagnation of wages. iii) Increases of informal activities. iv) The economic crisis and the fall down of family budgets v) State corruption and the disintegration of the state institutions started in late 1970s. It is significant to mention that other countries such as Egypt adopted the liberalization policies but reserved the middle class because of the strong state institutions. Egypt keeps strong and old political parties, trade unions, journals, education and health programmes in addition to subsidizing basic needs such as bread, health care, education etc. The middle class in Egypt represented the bulk and support of Socialist Union, that is why the state despite applied measures of liberalization, supported the middle class and promoted its existence as a consolidated class.

It is important to mention the role played by the World Bank and IMF in the Sudanese economy in the 1970s that deepened the root causes of the economic crisis. The World Bank and IMF cooperated in developing the Economic Recovery Program, which combined: currency devaluation; liberalization of trade; bank credit restrictions; domestic interest rate increases; curtailment of the growth of the money supply; reduction of the government's budget deficit through unspecified spending cuts, massive layoffs, and removal of subsidies on food and other consumption items; establishment of a moratorium (suspension) a new development projects and promotion of Sudan's traditional export sector, especially cotton; and increasing privatization of economic assets and processes.<sup>310</sup> In 1978, when the government signed its first stabilization agreement with the IMF, the World Bank halted all its funding for rainfed mechanized food production schemes. Convinced of Sudan's comparative advantage in the

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<sup>306</sup> Ibid.

<sup>307</sup> Tim Niblock, "Sudan's Economic Nightmare", Middle East Report (MERIP), No.135, Sudan's Revolutionary Spring, September 1985, p.15.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

<sup>309</sup> African Rights, op.cit., p.15.

<sup>310</sup> John Prendergast, "The Political Economy of Famine in Sudan and The Horn of Africa", A Journal of Opinion, Vol.19, No.2, Summer, 1991, p.51.

production of cotton, the World Bank proposed a massive rehabilitation plan to rebuild the cotton producing infrastructure which had deteriorated since the early 1970s. The economic, social and political effects of the export led growth model in Sudan became increasingly graphic. Both the mechanized grain and irrigated cotton schemes supported by the Bank in Sudan have given the advantage to the wealthiest segments of the society with capital to invest (traders, religious leaders, military officials, already large land-owners and agribusiness), while pushing small holders off their land.<sup>311</sup>

The *Ingazh* regime started its era by convening a three-week National Economic Salvation Conference in October-November 1989, where it pushed wide-ranging measures conforming to IMF demands—a review of the performance of state concerns and banks, the effect of subsidies, measures to increase direct and indirect taxes, cuts in spending, and the possible introduction of user fees in health and education. Authorities increased the price of bread a further 15 percent and instructed bakers to mix sorghum with wheat to reduce imports costs. Foreign exchange reserves then stood at just \$21.4 million. In February 1990, the government announced a new exchange rate for cotton exporters (LS8.30=\$1), an effort to keep cotton earnings in the official economy and boost foreign exchange reserves. The government also, opened talks with the IMP in mid-May 1990, after being given until July to begin settling debt arrears to the Fund of \$1.150 million or face expulsion. By mid-1990, one quarter of Sudan's external debt of more than \$13 billion was due for repayment. The regime cut bread subsidies and ended sugar imports to save around \$400 million per year. It reduced sugar imports by half and repaid \$15million to the IMF. Strict measures were introduced to curtail illegal foreign currency transactions.<sup>312</sup> Moreover, “wheat was planted in areas traditionally devoted to cotton: around 2.5 million feddans (1 million hectares) in 1990 were devoted to wheat, compared to 200,000 in 1986. The Bank of Sudan requested all banks to devote 40 percent of local currency funds to agriculture. Privatization of state and partially state-owned (parastatal) firms and liberalization of trade is another pillar of the program. The underlying privatization agenda is to entrench the National Islamic Front (NIF) in the country's economy. Public sector enterprises—for example, the White Nile Tannery and Sudan Textiles—are being sold cheaply to members or supporters of the NIF. Sale of other factories likewise appears to depend on the ideological acceptability of aspiring purchasers as well as their access to capital.

The economic situation since 1990s is not that much better than it was in the late-1970s and early 1980s. The country's account balance of payments deficit in 1997 has reached over US\$800 million. The parallel exchange rate deteriorated after 1992, the year when economic liberalization measures were declared. During the period 1992-1995, the exchange rate deteriorated seven times. The exchange rate in 1997 was over LS2500 per dollar, up from only LS 18 in the late 1980s. Money supply increased by more than 30% annually during the past decade. Official annual inflation rates exceeded 100%, but the actual rates are greater than that figure. Compared to the early 1970s, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for greater Khartoum was 10 times in 1983, 100 times in

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<sup>311</sup> Ibid, pp.51-52.

<sup>312</sup> Benaiah Yongo-Bure, “Sudan's Deepening Crisis”, *Middle East Report (MERIP)*, Sudan Finding Common Ground, September-October 1991, p.10.

1989, 1,000 times in 1993, 5,000 times in 1995 and over 11,000 by 1996.<sup>313</sup> Accordingly, the growth rate of the number of poor families was estimated to be more than 4% annually. The income-expenditure gap is estimated to be 2.7 fold and increasing over time. Studies indicated that the bulk of Sudanese are in absolute poverty ranging between 85% to 94%, and the rich-poor gap is growing. Studies in 1997 show that 86.5% of urban dwellers are classified as “poor”.<sup>314</sup>

The cost of living in Greater Khartoum, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), rose to 10 multiples in 1983, to 100 times in 1989, to 1,000 times in 1993, to a staggering 5,000 times in 1995, and to an astounding 11,263 times by 1996. Thus, the purchasing power of the national currency was reduced, exponentially, to almost *one twelve thousandth* of its value over a quarter century. In other words, twelve thousand Sudanese Pounds would be needed in 1996 to exercise the same command over commodities in the domestic economy as one Pound did in the early 1970s. Over the same quarter century, the exchange rate of the Sudan Pound against the US dollar plummeted by more than 5,000 times.<sup>315</sup>

In the course of the economic deterioration, the commercial sector tended to grow at the expense of the middle class, and thus, merchants move towards the upper level of the class structure while the salaried groups move below the minimum standard of living. The middle class is in the process of disappearing as most of its members are joining the lower income groups.<sup>316</sup>

On the other hand, the expansion of higher education in the 1990-2007 increased graduates students. Student intake jumped from 6,080 in 1989 to 13,210 in 1990-91 and 38,623 in 1999-2000. The number of public educational institutions increased from 5 universities and 1 polytechnic in 1989 to 26 universities in 1996 (the one polytechnic, KTI, was promoted to university status). The number of private higher education institutions increased from 1 in 1989 to 16 in 1996 and 22 in 2000. The number of students enrolled in private higher education institutions increased nearly 9-fold within 4 years: from 2,686 in 1990-91 to 23,476 in 1994-95.<sup>317</sup> In 2007 there was 57 institutes all over the Sudan and 200,000 annual graduates. This jump in graduated students led to the increase of rate of unemployment which reached 18.7%.<sup>318</sup> The layoff for public good that reached 95,000 is another cause of psychological dissatisfaction.

The process of de-colonization led to frustrate Sudanese middle class. Warburg stated that, the frustrated educated class was, both during the Condominium and much later, less representative than the sects or the tribes whose leaders dominated the first

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<sup>313</sup> Badr –El Din A. Ibrahim, Ibrahim, “The Role of Home Based Enterprises (HBEs) in Alleviating Sudanese Urban Poverty and the Effectiveness of Policies and Programmes to Promote HBEs”, Sudan Economy Research Group, University of Bremen and Institute for World Economics and International Managements, Germany, Discussion paper no.34, December 2002, p.5. Available at: <http://www.iwim.uni-bremen.de/publikationen/pub-sudan.htm>.

African Rights, Food and Power in Sudan: A Critique of Humanitarianism, May 1997, African Rights, p.2

<sup>314</sup> Ibid., p.3

<sup>315</sup> “Poverty Eradication in Sudan”, by [www.almishkat.org](http://www.almishkat.org).

<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

<sup>317</sup> “Country Higher Education Profile”, [http://www.bc.edu/bc\\_org/avp/soe/cihe/inhea/profiles/Sudan.htm](http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/inhea/profiles/Sudan.htm)

<sup>318</sup> CIA Factbook-Sudan, available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/su.html#Econ>

Assembly and the early political parties.<sup>319</sup> If additional proof is required it may be found the election results, including those of April 1986. The only political alternative of consequences, which threatened the overwhelming majority of the Ansar-Umma and the Khatmiyya-Democratic Unionist to a certain extent, was the Muslim Brothers' National Islamic Front and not the modern parties of the secularized elite. Should this supremacy be attributed to mistaken British policies during the first half of the century, or to the continued strength and vitality of popular-sectarianism and political Islam? The answer to this question lies in the above discussion i.e. the factors that resulted in a) marginalization of the educated Sudanese, b) economic crisis that resulted in high percentages of unemployment c) political crisis that resulted in high number of lay off for public good. All these factors called religion to play greater role in society.

### 3.6 Conclusion

From the discussion it is found that there is no single definition of the middle class. There are different segments of educated groups that compose the middle class. When comes to the case of Sudanese middle class it is found that the middle class has its inbuilt limitations, as being the product of colonial rule and therefore highly Westernized in their culture especially in the early 1930s, 1940s and up to 1950s. The Sudanese middle class suffered conflicting stances, collaborators versus diggers of graves of colonialism. The educated strata was part of colonialism and at the same time they were leaders of decolonization process. In other words they were faithful to their official duties and at the same time conspire to get rid of colonialism. Moreover they suffered Sectarian influence as the educated strata were unable to forge independent alliances with the masses. The educated strata suffered weak economic muscles, status and segregation, and lack of a charismatic leader. The Westernized culture expressed in the cultural activities and writings of the *effendiyya* were very far of the Sudanese realities, in which most of the population were illiterate. Deep efforts of understanding Sudanese realities and address real Sudanese problems were lacked.

The educated strata was divided among itself into “effendiyyas” and “turban” and the Ansar and the Khatmiyya and among advocates of secularism versus advocates of *Shari'a*. This weakness of the educated strata continues as with the growing of new state bureaucracy after 1969 military coup d'état when they were devoid of being part of decision-making. In the late 1970s and with the application of structural adjustments programmes that continued till the 1990s, the educated strata fell down to join the lower classes. Liberalization of the economy deepened the crisis.

At the eve of the 1970s, the Sudanese middle class largest sector, the *effendiyya*, were subjected to a process of withering of their economic base. This process resulted from state policies that advocated the measures of IMF and IBRD in leading the Sudanese economy. These processes were culminated in the 1990s, when the state withdrew from its social role and adopted drastic process of liberalization and state retreat from supporting health and education, liberalizing the market while fixing the salaries. The result was a withering Westernized culture, that they used to advocate and a search for a new ideation and new beliefs took place. This new ideation happened to be

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<sup>319</sup> Gabriel Warburg, Islam, Sectraiansim, op.cit., p.129

religious and among two types of Islam that are competing, “legal Islam” and “Popular Islam” represented by Sufi circles.

It is clear that the middle class calls religion to play during crisis. Sondra Hale pointed to the question of the research with an attempt to answer the questions that: Are there social processes which religions reinforce or reassert which allow a society to realign itself after social or economic upheavals? She asked if Islam, in particular, lends itself more easily than other religions to a “realignment” strategy. The answer to these questions will be provided in the coming chapters.

The phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* could be understood within this process of the withering away of the Sudanese middle class as a result of identity and economic crisis which caused its fragmentation and impoverishment and led it to join lower classes in society. The phenomenon of the *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* could be considered as crisis phenomenon.

## **Chapter Four**

### ***Shaikh Al Bur'ai's Sufi Doctrine***

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter intended to review Al Bur'ai's Sufi doctrine. This is because the Sufi doctrine reflects his distinguished status among the Sufi circles. Also, it reflects his moderation that attracted the Sudanese beyond Sufi and tribal loyalties.

#### **4.2 Doctrine of the Sammaniyya Tariqa**

The doctrine of the Sammaniyya *tariqa* originates from the work of Al Samman the founder of the *tariqa*. This is because the founder's thought remains the ideological backbone of the *tariqa* in spite of developments added by his disciples. However, the importance of the founder to the followers of the *tariqa* is not absolute, as it is governed by the local conditions and the social realities in which the *tariqa* functions.<sup>320</sup> It is significant to mention that the doctrine of the Sammaniyya *tariqa*, from which *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* originated connotes individualism i.e. each disciple can be a *Shaikh* of himself and can make his own litanies. The researcher in a previous work argued that, to assure his independent status from any other prominent *Shaikhs*, Al-Samman stated that his Sufi status was not reached by Al-Shazali, Abd Al-Qadir Al-Jilani, nor Al-Badawi, Al Dasuqi or Al-Ruf'ai. He stated that he owes his Sufi status only, to his *Shaikh*-the Prophet. Here Al-Samman resembles many of the other Muslim *walis* (saints) in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century who claimed to have a direct relationship and intercessions with the Prophet, such as Ahmed b. Idris and his two disciples Al-Sanusi and Al-Mirghani who claimed that the Prophet gave them their litanies (*awrad*). The independence of Al-Samman is said to be acquired in an intercession with the Prophet (*hadra*)<sup>321</sup>

##### **4.2.1 Doctrine of Al-Samman**

It is important to review the scholarly background of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. This background is centred in the writings of the Sammaniyya figures, masters and disciples. Muhammad b. Abd Al-Karim Al Samman, the founder, was born in (1130 A.H/1718) and died in (1189 A.H/1775) in Madina (Hijaz). Al Samman was a Meccan *'Alim* and a Sufi. He started as *'Alim* (scholar) but was initiated into Sufism by Mustafa b. Kamal al-Din Al-Bakri, who was a Syrian *Khalwati* in Hijaz. Al Samman was a product of a reactivation and revivalism of Sufi thought. The term revival can be understood to refer to: an increase in the number of adherents, a

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<sup>320</sup> Amani Mohamed El Obeid, "The Sammaniyya Tariqa in Sudan: Doctrine and Politics", unpublished M.sc. dissertation, University of Khartoum, 1997, p.73.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid, pp.84-85



geographical expansion, a reorganization of the order, an increased political significance and an intellectual revival.<sup>322</sup>

Al Samman was disciple of Mustafa b. Kamal al-Din al-Bakri (1099-1162/1688-1749) who was active in the center of the Islamic world i.e. Syria and Egypt. He was a member of the Khalwatiyya order and has left us a sizeable *oeuvre* (books) which for the most part still awaits scholarly investigations. He wrote over 220 works. The most important of these works is *Bulaghat al-murid wa-Mushtaha muwaffaq al Sa'id*.<sup>323</sup> It represents an important book for the Sufi initiation.

Al Samman is the top founder of the Sammaniyya *tariqa* in the Sudan that influenced the political history of the Sudan in the nineteenth century in what is known as the Mahdist revolution. Muhammad Al Mahdi, the leader of this revolution started as a Sammani *Shaikh*. A preliminary survey of Al Samman's writings indicates 19 titles. The most three important as follows: 1) *Al Futuhat al-ilahiyya fi al Tawjuhat al-Ruhiyya* in which the concept of the *Nur al-Muhammadi* and *al-Tariqa al Muhammadiyya* are presented. Here chapter one describes the cosmic role of the *Nur al Muhammadi*, as well as the mystic path by means of which one may experience a vision of the manifestations of that light and attains unification with it—that is to say the *tariqa Muhammadiyya*. 2-*Jaliat al-Kurab wa munilat al-arab*<sup>324</sup> It is Al Samman's *twasul* in case of dangers. 3-*Al-Nafahat al Ilahiyya fi Kayfiat Suluk al Tariqa al-Muhamaddiya* which is a handbook of eight chapters. It deals with 1-*tauba* (repentance), 2- *Akhdh al'Ahd* (Sufi Contract), 3-*Dhikr* (litanies), 4-*Khalwa* (retreat), 5-*Nafy al-Khawatir* (negation of thoughts), 6-*Suhba* (one relation to the fellow member of the order), 7- *Adab ma' al-Shaikh* (rules of dealing with the *Shaikh*)

One of the main principles of Al-Samman doctrine is that he is the Seal of Muhammadan *Willaya* (saintship). Here Al-Samman order resembles the Khatmiyya and Tijaniyya<sup>325</sup> which entails their superiority over other Sufi *tariqas*. However, the Sammaniyya *tariqa* did not in practice reject free movement between Sufi orders.<sup>326</sup> This fact was utilized by Al Bur'ai to address the different Sufi orders, as we shall see in the following sections.

Al Samman's intellectual formation was influenced by Ibn 'Arabi (d. 638/1240). Al Samman stated that: "My approach is that of Ibn 'Arabi and my *tariqa* is Qadiri".<sup>327</sup> The influence of Ibn 'Arabi on Al-Samman could be attributed to the intellectual sphere which prevailed in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century Sufi orders. Trimingham see in such orders a complex relationship to the mystical and philosophical tradition of Ibn 'Arabi. Moreover, Al Samman was a product of the wave of Sufi-*'Ulama* compromise that prevailed in the eighteenth century Hijaz. He was described as a revivalist teacher who was contemporary with Abd Allah al-Mahjoub al-Mirghani (father of Muhammad 'Uthman, founder of the Khatmiyya

<sup>322</sup> Fredrick De Jong, "Mustafa Kamal Al-Din Al-Bakri (1688-1749): Revival and Reform of The Khalwatiyya Tradition", in Nehemia Levtzion and John O. Voll (eds), *Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform in Islam*, Syracuse University Press, 1995, p.120.

<sup>323</sup> Bernd Radtke, "Sufism in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century: An Attempt at a Provisional Appraisal", *Die Welt des Islams*, New Ser., Islamic Enlightenment in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Vol. 36, no.3, November 1996, p.331.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid., p.332. For more details see Amani Mohamed El Obeid, "The Sammaniyya Tariqa: Doctrine and Politics", op.cit., pp.72-92.

<sup>325</sup> It is important to mention that Ahmad El Tijani was a disciple of Al Samman before forming his own *tariqa*. Refer to Bernd Radtk, op.cit., p.332.

<sup>326</sup> Amani Mohamed El Obeid, op.cit., p.85.

<sup>327</sup> Abdel Mahmoud Nur Al Dai'm, *Al Kuus al Mutraa' fi Manaqib al Sadda al-Arbaa'*, Egypt, 1954, p.29.

*tariqa* in the Sudan). They were considered as part of the wider revivalist intellectual group.<sup>328</sup>

Concerning Al-Samman teachings, the writer will concentrate on his celebrated *Risalat:Al-Nafahat al-Ilahiyya fi Kayfiyyat Siluk Al Tariqa Al-Muhammadiyya*. This is because it represents the backbone of Al-Samman teachings, as it summarizes most of the arguments of Al-Samman and his instructions to the Sammani disciples. In this document, Al-Samman made emphasis on repentance (*tawba*) and purification of the disciple from sins. Al-Samman assigned three prerequisites to repentance (*tawba*): (i) remembering the ugliness of the sin, (ii) remembering the firmness of God's punishment. (iii) remembering one's weakness before God.<sup>329</sup>

The common feature of the Sufi doctrine is centered around the following: After the initial confession of sin and repentance from all deeds that would compromise the journey to God, the Sufi's major preoccupation is with crushing one's passions, fighting, as the Sufis say, against one's own soul. According to *Hadith*, the Prophet said, "We have return from the lesser *jihad* (warfare) to the greater *jihad* (i.e. self-discipline). This greater *jihad* is the struggle to purify the soul of all forms of evil and negligence, for, in the words of one modern Sufi, "It is the soul that veils us from the vision of the truth and incites us to acts of disobedience and attachment to lust and material things. By such things be become heavy and can not enter the world of spirit to see the beauty and light of truth".<sup>330</sup>

For Al-Samman *Jihad* is the self-discipline inside the path (*tariq*). Self-discipline is a core point in the Sammaniyya doctrine. Al-Samman denied the argument of fatalists who advocate that all deeds of a person are pre-ordained by God. He argues that: "God (*Allah*) makes his slaves fulfill their obligations. In order to do that *Allah* gave them part of his will and area of voluntary freedom through which they either fulfill or not fulfill these obligations."<sup>331</sup> This point of voluntary freedom was developed in the Sammaniyya doctrine into an individualist spirit. Al Bur'ai developed the concept of the self-discipline to be the core of his doctrine, as we shall see in his poetry. Al-Samman emphasized *tarbiyya* (instruction) rather than *karama*, though he did not deny secret knowledge. It is found that unlike Al-Samman, Al Bur'ai developed the concept of *karama* to be core concept in his doctrine, being himself a *karama* maker or miracle doer.

It is clear that the formula of the spiritual contract between the disciple and his *Shaikh* does not stress absolute submission of the disciple to the *Shaikh*; as committing error by the *Shaikh* will untie the spiritual contract. Here the Sammaniyya order keeps a space for reason and freedom for the disciple.

Al Samman thinks that there are pre-requisite for *dhikr*, such as repentance (*al-twba*), self-discipline by spiritual exercise, isolation from people and lessening food and water. When the disciple has no *Shaikh* to initiate him, Al-Samman provided steps for entering *khalwa* independently. Such steps are: ablution, praying and reciting al-Fatiha and some of the Quran verses. These steps indicate a degree of independence, the Sammaniyya *tariqa* assigns to the disciple, as doing such steps needs no *Shaikh*.<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>328</sup> Amani Mohamed El Obeid, op.cit., p.86.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid., p.87.

<sup>330</sup> Valerie J. Hoffman, "Eating and Fasting. For God in Sufi Tradition.", *Journal of American Academy of Religoin*, Vol.36, No.3, Autumn 1995, p.469.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid., p.89.

<sup>332</sup> Amani Mohamed El Obeid, op.cit., p.89.

Another element of independence and individualism of the disciple is the concept of the Perfect Man, which glorifies the Prophet, is dominant in the Sammaniyya order and represents the essence of the individualism in the Sammaniyya *tariqa*. Al-Samman states that:

If you pray on the Prophet (PBUH), notice that He is praying and not you. Because all things were created from His light. You should pray on Him until you are taken by Him. At that level you became a Perfect Man that inherited the Muhammad Reality.<sup>333</sup>

Like many of the eighteenth and nineteenth century orders, the Sammaniyya doctrine is centered on the concept of the Muhammadan Reality. The Prophet is the mediator between Allah and human beings. The Prophet's love is the base of faith, the door of knowledge and secret of power. Out of the Prophet's light, the creatures have been created, and out of his generosity, (*fayd*), people and trees live. By the Prophet's love, the slave obtains his needs and diminishes in his Great light, reaching his ultimate goal. Thus it could be said the ultimate goal of the Sufi, is reaching the Prophet.<sup>334</sup>

Al-Samman has a complete manuscript on "*Al Insan al Kamil*" or the Perfect Man.<sup>335</sup> The researcher thinks that this importance of the concept of the Perfect Man in the Sammaniyya *tariqa* influenced the historical development of the *tariqa* in the Sudan. This concept of could be part of the definition of the Sufi. The Sufi is he who traverses the path of love and devotion towards the Absolutely Real. He believes that knowledge of the Real is accessible only to the Perfect Man and that the imperfect man is blind to this knowledge by reason of his very imperfection. The Sufi considers 'normal' man in his imperfection to be suffering from an illness which causes his perception and discernment to be constantly in error. Thus, ordinary men

<sup>333</sup> Muhammad b. 'Abd Al-Karim Al-Samman, *Al Nafahat...*, op.cit., pp.40-41.

<sup>334</sup> Muhammad ibn Abdel Karim Al-Samman, "*Al Futuhat Al-Ilahiyya fi al-Tawajuh al-Ruhiyya Li Al-Hadra Al-Muhammadiyya*", unpublished manuscript, , p.1, NRO, Misc. 2/25/3425.

<sup>335</sup> The Sammaniyya order, O'Fahey Property, Box 30, 535. Centre of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, Bergen Univeristy, Norway

It is important here to sum up most of the written texts of Al-Samman as follows:

- 1-*Al Nasiha al 'Alwyia li al-Sada al-Ahdaliyya* (manuscript),
- 2-*Tuhfat al Quom fi muhimat al Ru'ia wa al Nuoum* (manuscript),
- 4-*'Awnwan al Galwa fi Sha'n al Khalwa*,
- 5-*al Futuhat al-Ilahiyya fi al Tawaguh al Ruhiyya li al-Hadhra al Muhamadiyya* ( found in Library of al Azhar No. 602),
- 6- *al-Insan al Kamil*,
- 7- *Kashf al-Astar fi ma Yta'laq bi al Ism al Qahar* (Manuscript in Dar al Kutub al Misriyya, No.687).
- 8-*Ighathat al-Lahfan wa Mu'ansat al-Walhan*.
- 9-*Al futuhat al Makkiyya* (manuscript)
- 10-*Al-Nafha al Aqdasiyya or al-Qasidda al-'Ayniyya and Kashf al Astar al-Wahmiyya an Jamal Muhia al Qasidda al 'Ayniyya*.
- 11-*Al Mawahib al Aqdasiyya fi shrah al Minha al-Muhammadiyya*.
- 12-*Al Minha al Muhammadiyya or Salat Nugtat Dai'rat al Wugud*.
- 13-*Muflah al-Qubul fi al-Salah Ala al Rasul*
- 14-*Galiyyat al Kurab fi al Tawasul*.
- 15-*Mukhtasar al Tariqa al Muhammadiyya* . (This manuscript is found in Paris library.)
- 16-*Al Nafahat al-Ialhiyya fi Kayfiat Siluk al Tariqa al Muhammadiya*.
- 17-*Mawlid al Nabi*.

distort their conception of Reality by their very imperfection and unconsciously go astray.<sup>336</sup>

According to Al-Samman, the Prophet was created from Light of *Al Dhat al Ilahiyya* and sums its deeds, effects, influences and sequences. Moreover, Al-Samman states: "That the Prophet's status is that between the Absolute Reality and the realities of the created beings. For this reason, his status is above all creatures and under Allah alone".<sup>337</sup>

According to El Obied, there are two basic concepts dominating Al-Samman's doctrine: the first one is the reality of the Prophet, which is reached by following his *Shari'a*. The second one is the secret of the reality of the Prophet which is reached by crossing the Sea of Love. Any one who follows the Prophetic tradition esoterically and exoterically, will cross the Sea of Love to find himself within in the Prophet's majesty. Here one can find the influence of Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine of the Perfect Man (*Al-Insan al-Kamil*) which is a form of the Greek idea of Logos. Ibn 'Arabi's Logos represents the agent through which Allah can emerge from His absoluteness, His unknowableness into manifestation. The Prophet thus becomes the agent of Allah's manifestation in the world.

Muhammad being the seal of the prophets, is seen as the most complete of these manifestations. This complete expression of Allah through man is the heart of the idea of the Perfect Man, a microcosmic being who unites the Creator and created attributes of the Essence, is at once the image of Allah and the archetype of the universe. Having approaching the Prophet's ideal as the ultimate goal of the disciple, is a realization implicitly entails social equity and respect of the human being regardless of race, sex or religion.<sup>338</sup> The influence of Ibn 'Arabi is very clear in the Sammaniyya *tariqa* whose doctrine is centered on the Muhammadan reality. Tied to the idea of the Muhammadan Reality, for Ibn 'Arabi is the concept of the perfect human being. The difference between the two figures of the perfect man and the Muhamadan Reality is often hard to distinguish since they perform the same intermediary functions between God and creations.<sup>339</sup>

Another important point of the Sammaniyya doctrine is that Al-Samman did not confine himself to only one School of jurisprudence (*Madhhab*). He followed the teachings of the Prophet that are found in Quran and the Sunna. This is by fulfilling it through the four *Madhab* (Shafi', Maliki, Hanafi and Hanbali). He put more emphasis on *Ijtihad* which indicates the independent and individualist nature of Sammanis.

For Al-Samman the following of the ideal of the Prophet could not be attained unless through a guide (*Shaikh*) or through attraction by God (*Jazb Ilahi*). Also it could be attained by recalling (*Istihdar*) the vision, feeling, piety, politeness, greatness and majesty of the Prophet's personality.<sup>340</sup> Thus, the disciple who says prayers and blessings to Prophet Muhammad, even in pretence, continuously while recalling his vision will soon be very near to Him. The levels of praying to the Prophet are: praying with the tongue, with the heart, with the spirit (*Ruh*) and secretly. Those who bestow blessings on the Prophet will gain Paradise, and those who bestow

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<sup>336</sup> Javad Nurbakhsh, "What is sufism? Sufism and Psychoanalysis. Part I", available [http://humanevol.com/doc/doc\\_2003o7151101.html](http://humanevol.com/doc/doc_2003o7151101.html)

<sup>337</sup> Amani M.El Obeid, op.cit., p.97.

<sup>338</sup> Amani M. El Obeid, op.cit.,p.93.

<sup>339</sup> Richard J. A. Mc Gregor, "A Medieval Saint on Sainthood", *Studia Islamica*, No.95, 2002, pp.96-97.

<sup>340</sup> Mohamed Ibn Abdel Karim Al-Samman, *Al Futuhat ...*, op.cit., p.3.

blessings on Him with hearts, spirits and secret will gain a nearer place to *Allah*.<sup>341</sup> *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai developed two major elements: 1) Self-discipline and 2) The importance of praying on the Prophet to be the core of his doctrine, as we shall see.

#### 4.2.2 Doctrine of Ahmad Al Tayyib Al Bashir

Ahmed Al-Tayyib Al Bashir is the main founder of the Sammaniyya *tariqa* in the Sudan. He has contributed largely in the development and shaping of the Sammaniyya *tariqa* in the Sudan. After he departed from Hijaz in (1178/1764-5), with the permission of Al-Samman to initiate people in the Sammaniyya *tariqa* in his homeland, Ahmad Al-Tayyib Al-Bashir became responsible for the localization and modification of the Sammaniyya *tariqa* to fit the Sudanese society. His arguments, thoughts, writings and Sufi tradition as a *karama* maker (miracles doer) remain the most influential among the Sudanese Sammanis. Ahmed Al Tayyib Al Bashir was born in the village of Umm Marihi (northern Omdurman) in the western shore of the Nile in 1155/1742/43). He was born into a family of learned men who belonged to the Qadiri *tariqa* of Hassan *wad* Hussuna.

The spread of the Sammaniyya order in the Sudan under Ahmad al-Tayyib w. al-Bashir was another example of a Sudanese going out into the wider world and bringing back new impulses. But the Sammaniyya was only the precursor for the spread of a number of other orders or brotherhoods that were to dominate the devotional life – and thus the writings – of the Northern Sudanese in the nineteenth century and beyond. The new orders were organized on a much more centralized and hierarchical basis than the clan-based holy men, of vaguely a Qadiri or Shadhili persuasion, of the century before. All the new orders, Khatmiyya, Isma'iliyya, Majdhubiyya, Rashidiyya and several others including the Sanusiyya in the central Sahara—with the exception of the Sammaniyya and Tijaniyya – were influenced by the great Moroccan mystic and *muhaddith*, Ahmad b. Idris (1163/1749-50-1253/1837).<sup>342</sup>

Al-Bashir met Muhammad ibn Abdel Karim Al-Samman in Madina whom the latter welcomed and hosted him in the Sammaniyya Zawiyah. Ahmed al-Tayyib al Bashir spent and studied with the Samman a period of seven years. Al-Samman used to take Ahmed al-Tayyib Al Bashir to the pilgrimage during his stay in Madina.<sup>343</sup> Like Al-Samman Ahmad al-Tayyib Al-Bashir was a real Sufi scholar. He wrote about 32 books, *Ahzab* and prayers.<sup>344</sup> In Sudan, Ahmad Al-Tayyib Al Bashir was famous

<sup>341</sup> Ibid, pp1-2.

<sup>342</sup> John Hunwich, "The Arabic Writings of Eastern Sudanic Africa: An Overview", available at <http://www.isita.org/dls/ALA1-Overviewp.p.4>.

<sup>343</sup> Hasan al-Fatih Qarib Allah, "Dour Ahmed Al Tayyib fi Al fikr wa al-Da'awa ila Allah" (The Role of Ahmed Al Tayyib Al Bashir in Thought and Preaching for God), *Al Qaum*, December 1987, NRO, Mis. 1/248/3255, Selected articles, Property of O'Fahey, Bergen University, P. 6.

<sup>344</sup> The most important of which is *kitab al-Hikam: Al Jawhar al-Farid fi ilm al-Wuhda wa al-Tawhid*. The complete collection of *Shaikh* Ahmed Al Tayyib Al Bashir are:

1-*Al Nafass Al Rahmani fi Al Tour Al Insani*

2-*Al Munajat*.

3-*Kitab al Hikam: Al Gawahar al Farid fi 'Aluom al Wihda wa al Tawhid*. It is published for the first time in Cairo in 1955.

4-*Risalat fi al Khalwa*.

5-*Kitab al Basmala (in 25 parts)*.

6-*Risala fi I'lm al Kiemia* (manuscript).

7-*Kitab al Birouq al Ithna 'Ashar*. (manuscript)

8-*Ratib al Sa'ada*

9-A Summary of Ratib al Sa'ada, (first published in 1969)

for being 'Alim at the first level. This is very clear in his writings. However after settling in the mosque of his grandfather, Ahmad Al-Tayyib Al Bashir was famous for his ability to perform *karama*. These abilities attracted so many people from among the Qadiriyya order followers to his *tariqa*. It is found that Ahmad Al-Tayyib Al Bashir summed up both the Prophet Muhammad's secrets of healing as well as the local African medicine. Mc Hugh clarified the social and political impact of the healing abilities of the *Shaikhs* in the following statement:

“The healing faculty was perhaps the one most demanded of the Sudanese holymen on a daily basis and it often provided the most intimate and enduring bond with *Makk* and *Manjil* and therefore with political influence and patronage.”<sup>345</sup>

Praying on the Prophet is an important factor in the doctrine of Ahmad Al Tayyib Al Bashir. He used to perform *Salat* (praying) on the Prophet twelve thousands times a day, until he claimed that he saw the Prophet in full consciousness. Ahmed Al Tayyib Al Bashir emphasized that performing *Salat* on the Prophet is a means of acquiring Sufi status and *karama*.<sup>346</sup>

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10-*Hizb al Aman*. First published in 1956.

11-*Sirr al Assrar fi Al Salat 'Ala al Nabi al Mukhtar*. (First published in Cairo in 1959).

12-*Hizb al Galal*.

13-*Hizb al Gamal*.

14-*Hizb al Kamal*

15- *Sir Al Asrar*.

16-*Al Salawat al-Taiybiyya* which is composed of:

- a) *Al Salat al Lahoutiyya*
- b) *Salat al Fatah*
- c) *Al Salat al Siddiqiyya*
- d) *Al Salat al Matmatiyya*
- e) *Al Salat 'Ala Ahl al Nabi*
- f) *Salat Miftah al Quloub*
- g) *Salat Miftah al Ma'arif*
- h) *Al Salat al Kamaliyya*
- i) *Al Salat al Ruhiyya (manuscript)*
- j) *Al Salat al Jamaliyya (manuscript)*
- k) *Salat al Ism al 'Azam*.
- l) *Salat Laziz al Khitab*
- m) *Salat al 'Azhama*
- n) *Al Salat Al 'Arshiyya*
- o) *Al Salat al Nuriyya*
- p) *Al Salat al Nuraniyya (manuscript)*

17-*Kitab Khawass al Asma*, Cairo, 1959.

18-*Khawass al Qafat*

19-*Al Aayat al Munajat* (manuscript) available at the Sanahir family in Omdurman.

20-*Ad'ya*

21-Poems. It is included in *Azahir al Riayyadh*

All these collections are collected in *Al Tariqa al Sammaniyya fi Sitour* (Sammaniyya Order in lines manuscript made by Committee of Media, Sammaniyya Order, Centre of Middel Eastern and Islamic Studies, O'Fahey Property, Box 30, 535, Bergen University, Norway.

22- *Asrar wa Khawass* (included in *Azahir al Riayyadh*).

<sup>345</sup> Neil Mc Hugh, "Holy Men in The Blue Nile: Religious Leadership and the Genesis of An Arab Islamic Society in the Nilotic Sudan, 1500-1850", Ph.D dissertation in Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinios, U.S.A, 1986, p.122.

<sup>346</sup> Abdel Mahmoud Nur Al Da'im, *Azahir Al-Riyyad fi Manaqib al-'Arif bi Allah Taa'la Al Shaikh Ahmed Al Tayyib Al Bashir*, Cairo, 1960, p.62.

It is clear that Ahmad Al-Tayyib's ability to make *karama* represented a large portion of the Sammaniyya heritage and it resulted in his popularity in particular, as well as that of the Sammaniyya *tariqa* in general. In this way Ahmad Al-Tayyib Al Bashir could not escape the figure of a *wali*, in spite of the scholar tradition he acquired and developed.<sup>347</sup> Therefore the ability of *karama* making is well known in the Sammaniyya *tariqa*.

Ahmed Al Tayyib Al Bashir studied Prophetic tradition (*Hadith*) science. It is noticeable here that concentrating on *Hadith* science is an important characteristic of Sufi orders in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This is mainly because such orders emphasized the doctrine of the Perfect Man as a realization of the Prophet's person. For this reason the Prophet's tradition and *Hadith* science gained their importance.

One of the significant contribution of Ahmad Al Tayyib Al Bashir to the Sufi thought in Sudan in general and the Sammaniyya in particular is his idea of the unification of the religious thought. According to his theory in this respect he says:

“All the meaning of the one-hundred and the four holy books of other religions is condensed in the Quran. The meaning of the Quran is condensed in the Fatiha.”<sup>348</sup>

In continuation to Al-Samman's emphasis on Muhammadan Reality, Ahmad Al Tayyib Al Bashir stressed the importance of praying upon the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). For him, it surpassed the merits of more than seventy holy wars (*ghazwa*) and it fulfills the needs of the disciple. Moreover, by the continuous praying upon the Prophet, the disciple discovers the door of see the Prophet either asleep or awake. This in itself leads to the *Hadra* (intercession) Al-Muhammadiyah which a basic concept in the Sammaniyya doctrine.<sup>349</sup>

### 4.3 The Sufi Chain of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* was first initiated into the Sammaniyya *tariqa* by his father *Shaikh Waqi' Allah* who was initiated by *Shaikh Umar Muhamed Al Safi*. The later, *Shaikh Umar* was initiated by *Shaikh Birair ibn Hussain* who was initiated by Muhammad El Tom wad Bannaqa. The later, Muhammad El Tom wad Bannaqa was initiated by Ahmed Al Tayyib Al Bashir founder of the Sammaniyya *tariqa* in Sudan. And who was initiated by Muhammad ibn Abdel Karim Al Samman founder of the Sammaniyya *tariqa* in Hijaz.<sup>350</sup>

In one of his manuscripts, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* stated that the Sammaniyya *tariqa* is one of the Sufi *tariqas* and it has two chains: One relates to Ali ibn Abu Talib and the other relates it to the Prophet. He says the first chain through *Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abdel Karim Al Samman* through *Shaikh Mustafa ibn Kamal Al Din Al Bakri*. The other chain is through *Shaikh Muhammad Al Samman* through Abdel Qadir al Jaily that refers to Ali ibn Abi Talib which relates to the Prophet. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* thinks that the later chain is his own *tariqa*.<sup>351</sup> In the same manuscript, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* stated that he got his Qu'ranic and jurisprudence sciences in the *khalwa* of

<sup>347</sup> Amani M. El Obeid, "The Sammaniyya *Tariqa* in Sudan...", op.cit., p.108.

<sup>348</sup> Cited in Ibid, p.109

<sup>349</sup> Ibid.

<sup>350</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Bur'ai Al Sudan*, op.cit., p. 115.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid, first edition., p.43

his father *Shaikh* Waqi' Allah and that he continued studying under the supervision of his father who was teaching him Islamic classics until his death.<sup>352</sup> A *silsila* (chain) connects the contemporary *Shaikh* to the founding saint, through an initiate chain, each of whose links represents an oath (*'ahd*) between a disciple and his spiritual master. Members of each order regard certain persons, including founding figures and others among the *silsila*, as major saints. The veneration of these saints, in the form of faith, loving praise, devotion and request for assistance, is critically for the spiritual progress of members.<sup>353</sup>

***Shaikh Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai Pedigree (Sammani Silsila)***



<sup>352</sup> Ibid.

<sup>353</sup> Michael Frsikhkopf, "Changing Modalities in the Globalization of Islamic Saint Veneration and Musicism: Sidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi, *Shaikh* Muhammad 'Uthman al-Burhani, and other Sufi Order", *Religious Studies and Theology*, Vol.20, No.1 &2, 2001, p.2.



Birair Al Hussain  
 |  
 Umar Muhamad Al Safi  
 |  
 Muhamad Waqi' Allah  
 |  
 Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai<sup>354</sup>

In 1944, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai succeeded his father. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was not a direct successor of his father. Though *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai succeeded his father, the *Khalafa* (succession) went first to his brother Al Nour who was a merchant. It is stated that Al Nour did not stop trade activities even after being a *Shaikh*, and he had no time for running the affairs of the center. For this reason, it was *Shaikh* Abdel Rahim who stepped in to run the daily affairs of the center. In his first visit to Al Kiraida, after the death of his father, *Shaikh* Muhamad Ahmad of Al Kiraida declared him as successor of his father, with the agreement of grand disciples of *Shaikh* Umar, father of *Shaikh* Muhammad Ahmad.<sup>355</sup> After that he built the mosque of Al Zariba in order to welcome a number of one thousand students of Qura'nic studies.<sup>356</sup> It is interesting that *Al Zariba* started as a centre of an individual *faki*, during the life of his father *Shaikh* Wagi' Allah and later developed into a well recognized Sufi center.

#### 4.4 Doctrine of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai

Being a Sammani *Shaikh*, Al Bur'ai reviewed most of the writings of Al Samman and Ahmad Al Tayyib Al Bashir mentioned before. This is in addition to classical books received by his father *Shaikh* Waqi' Allah from publishers in Egypt, Lebanon and Syria. The researcher finds it is important to give a profile of the life of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai. His life is centered on severe self-discipline, continuous praying on the Prophet and continuous *dhikr*. In an interview with ex-Minister Khalafalla Al Rashid, the writer had a picture of the life of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai. He said:

“We came to visit him in Al Zariba in late 1970s me and the ex-Minister Zain Al 'Abidin we slept the night with him. After he generously welcomed us, we left *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai while he was sitting making *dhikr*. When we awaked up in the morning we found him in the same condition sitting and making *dhikr*. We asked one of his disciples when *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai awaked? the disciple replied that he did not stand up and he did not sleep since you went to bed i.e. he was sitting the whole night making *dhikr*”.<sup>357</sup>

Khalafalla Al Rashid states that, “We have been told that *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai during the life of his father *Shaikh* Waqi Allah was complaining of continuous sleeping. His father replied to him that we took away the sleeping from you and since then he was not sleeping during the night.”<sup>358</sup>

<sup>354</sup> Idid., p.115.

<sup>355</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmad (ed.) *Laik Salam Mini* by *Shaikh* Al Burai, Al Asbat center, 2003, p. 7.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid, p.56.

<sup>357</sup> Interview with Ex-Minister Khalafalla Al Rashid, London , 22 April 2006.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid.

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* composed his own doctrine and his own litanies within the Sammaniyya *tariqa*. His Sufi doctrine is very clear in his *Al Manzuma al Tawhidyya* which summarizes the bases of Sufism. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* says:

خليلي الدنيا لا تلهاك	العشرون صفاته فهاك
و بالايمن يزيد بهاك	خذها عن الشرك تنهاك
كذلك الخمسة السلبية	منها واحدة نفسية
ثم السبعة المعنوية	سبعة معاني واضحة جليلة
و البقاء و المخالفة تدم	أولها الوجوب و القدم
وحدانية يا ندم	قيامه بالنفس يا عجم
علم ضيف حياته عليها	القدرة الارادة تليها
كلام الله بلا تشبيهها	سمع و البصر يا نبيها
كونه عالما توكيدا	كونه قادرا و مريدا
متكلم بلا تعديدا	حي و سميع بصير يا مريدا
و الاشرار بذاك نفينا	فهذي الواجبات اوفينا
قل لي المستحيلات أين؟ <sup>359</sup>	يعلم ربي ما أخفينا

I give you the twenty characters of God. My friend do not be busy with life.  
Take them, they will take you away from infidleness and you will be delighted with faith

One of these characters is psychological and five are negative.  
Seven of them are very clear and then comes the seven intangible  
First of these characters is Existence, Oldness, Subsistence and the continuous exception  
Being the Self Oh ignorant, His uniqueness Oh regretters.  
Being Able and before that Being Willing, it is a science in addition to His Live.  
Vision and Listening Oh intelligent, God's words are unique  
Being Able and Being Willing and Knowledge  
He is living, listening and looking Oh disciple, He is Talking, Unaccountable.  
These are the characters which we gave and unbelieving in them we deny  
God knows what we hide. Tell me where are the impossibilities?

The doctrine of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* represents a moderate path among all Sudanese Sufi *tariqa*.<sup>360</sup> This moderate path is reflected into different aspects:

1) In fact in addition to the impact of the Sammaniyya *tariqa* on *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, when developed into a national figure in the 1990s-2005, he represented all Sufi orders. This is through his contact and through his strong relations with different Sufi *tariqas*. Though *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* was originally a Sammani *Shaikh*, who was initiated in the Sammaniyya *tariqa*, he overcame the boundaries of the Sammaniyya to reach all Sufi *tariqas* in Sudan. He managed to get *Ijaza* (religious licence) from other Sufi orders and in that way he became a center of all Sufi *tariqas* in Sudan.<sup>361</sup>

2) *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* did not restrict himself to one school of jurisprudence. Though he adopted a Maliki school of jurisprudence, he referred to other schools in his *fatwas*.<sup>362</sup> In this point he resembled the Sudanese Mahdi. His adoption of Maliki

<sup>359</sup> *Shaikh Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai*, *Hidayat Al Majid fi 'Ilm Al Fiqh wa Al Tawhid*, Al Asbat Centre, Khartoum, 2004, pp. 7-8.

<sup>360</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Bur'ai Al Sudan*, first edition, op.cit., p. 89.

<sup>361</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Bur'ai Al Sudan*, Second edition, op.cit., p.107.

<sup>362</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Bur'ai Al Sudan*, first edition, op.cit., p.89.

jurisprudence is evident in his *Al Manzuma Al-Fiq'hiyya* (poems of jurisprudence). He says:

<p>محمد رسول الله و أنتى على رسول الله و أصحابه الاحيو الملة بما أتى فى الكتاب مشروع و الاجماع به دل على فقه الامام مالك و أهل البادية و الحلة<sup>363</sup></p>	<p>لا اله الا الله بدأت القول بسم الله محمد خير خلق الله فأول ابتدا الموضوع و سنة النبى المتبوع و أنشئ النظم فى ذلك يفيد البادى و السالك</p>
--	--

No God But Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of God.  
I have started talking with In the Name of God and thanks to the Prophet of God  
Muhammad is the best of God's creatures and his companions who revive the nation  
The first subject is what is legitimate is the Book (Quran)  
And the Prophet Tradition and consensus  
I compose poetry in this subject based on the jurisprudence of Imam Malik  
It is useful for the beginner and the old one and the Bedouins and the villagers.

3) *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* Sudanized the Prophetic tradition. The status assigned to Prophet Mohammad and al *Haqiqa al Muhammadiyya* is very evident in his thought. Here he is influenced by the Sammaniyya tradition. Also glorification of the Prophet is very clear in most of his colloquial poetry. This will be discussed thoroughly in the next chapter.

The above-mentioned verses represent *Shaikh Al Bur'ai's* tolerance and moderation by acceptance of all Sufis. However, it is noticed by the researcher in a former work on the Sammaniyya that litanies developed by local Sammani *Shaikhs* are more celebrated than those developed by the founder, Al Samman, himself. For example, Ahmad Al-Tayyib's *Salat Sir Al-Asrar* is more circulated than Al Samman's *Salwat*. This is could be attributed to the fact that, it is simple and takes shorter time than that of Al Samman's.<sup>364</sup> Another reason is that, books in which the litanies of Al-Samman are written were not well circulated at the level of the mass followers. This was due to the spread of illiteracy and the weakness of publishing facilities. In the case of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, the researcher found that the simplicity of the litanies and the simple words used in the poetry attracts even the illiterate and is behind the popularity of Al Bur'ai. Litanies developed by Al Bur'ai, like the other Sammani litanies are time saving and much rewarding. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* adopted and developed different litanies. One of these litanies is the following:

"اللهم انى أسئلك بسر الذات و بذات السر هو أنت أنت لا اله الا أنت أنت لا اله الا أنت،  
احتجبت بنور الله و بنور عرش الله و بكل اسم هو الله من عدوى و عدوك و من شر خلق الله  
بمائة الف لا حول و لا قوة الا بالله ، ختمت على نفسى و دينى و أهلى و ولدى و جميع ما  
أعطانيه ربى بخاتم الله القدوس المنيع الذى ختم به على اقطار السموات و الارض حسبنا الله  
ونعم الوكيل و لا حول و لا قوة الا بالله العلى العظيم"<sup>365</sup>

<sup>363</sup> *Shaikh Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai, Hidayat Al Majid fi 'Ilm Al Figh wa Al Tawhid*, Al Asbat Publications, Khartoum, 2004, p.11.

<sup>364</sup> Amani M. El Obeid, "Doctrine and Politics...", op.cit., p.113

<sup>365</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Burai al Sudan*, Al Asbat Centre, No.4, Khartoum, 2006, p.234.

Oh God I ask you in the secret of You and the same secret of You no God but You, I was hidden by the Light of God and the Light of Throne of God and by every name of God from my enemy and the enemy of God and from the most evil people I ask you thousands thousands that no strength and no power but that of Thee. I sealed on myself, my religion, my family and my sons and all what God gave me with the Seal of God The Almighty, the Strong that sealed sky and earth, we do not have but the Almighty, the Best Supporter and no strength and no power but with God, the Highest, the Greatest.

This *Salat* is said once and for securing from any enemy. Below more details on litanies will be surveyed.

#### 4.5 Litanies of The Sammaniyya *Tariqa*

The spiritual contract (*al Baiy'a*) of the Sammaniyya order is the same for all Sammani centers throughout the Sudan. The text of *Al baiy'a* shows that there is no absolute submission to the *Shaikh* as in the Qadiriyya *tariqa*. From the text, committing error by the *Shaikh* will untie the spiritual contract. Therefore the disciple has an independent role while he is guided by the *Shaikh*. The text of the *baiy'a* is read as follows:

“I accept that Allah is my God, Islam is my religion, Muhammad is my Prophet, Quran is my guider, Kaa'ba is my direction, disciples are my brothers and the *Shaikh* is my guider and instructor. Rightness unites us and error disunites us.”

Like all the 19<sup>th</sup> century Sufi orders, the Sammaniyya *tariqa* is known of its time saving and maximum rewards litanies. Compared to the Qadiriyya *tariqa*'s litanies, the Sammani litanies are more concise. Basing on the Qadiri initiation *sanad*, Ahmad Al Tayyib Al Bashir adopted the Qadiri *award* but with some modifications. He used the same *dhikir* but with different counts. (Table no. 1)

##### The basic litanies (Asas *Al Tariqa*)<sup>366</sup>

Dhikir	Minimum	Average	Maximum
I beg forgiveness of God ( <i>Istighfar</i> )	2	20	200
Praying on the Prophet ( <i>Salat</i> )	2	20	200
There is no God but Allah ( <i>Hailala: La Ilaha Ila Allah</i> )	3	13	31
Oh God ( <i>Ya Allah</i> )	5	11	16
<i>Ya Hu</i>	11	19	270

<sup>366</sup> Shaikh Qarib Allah Salih, *Jam' I Al-Awrad al-Qaribiyya Al-Tayyibiyya Al-Sammaniyya: Minhata al Jawad wa Tuhfat al 'Ubad*, fourth edition, 1972, pp.26-27.

As *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* was initiated into the Sammaniyya order through the chain of the Y'aqubab, it is important to view the litanies of the Y'aqubab: **(Table no. 2)**

#### **Litanies of the Y'aqubab performed at night:**

<b>Dhikir at Night</b>	<b>Times of Reciting</b>
I beg forgiveness of God	2,000 times
Prayers on the Prophet	2,000 times
<i>Al-Basmala</i> (in the name of God, the merciful, the Passionate)	19,000 times
La Ilha Ila Allah (No God but Allah)	12,000 or 35,000 or 70,000 times

The basic litanies of the Y'aqubab do not differ much from the other Sammani centers. However, the Y'aqubab used to perform both the Qadiriyya and the Sammaniyya litanies. They give the Qadiriyya litanies to the young disciples and the Sammaniyya to the relatively old men. These litanies are usually performed by drums and *Madih*. What the Y'aqubab developed is *Al dhikr al-Siryani* in the great celebrations. They do not use drums in it. This type of dhikr is only known in this Sammani center. It could be attributed to the impact of the Qadiriyya tradition kept in the center.

#### **4.6 Litanies Developed by *Shaikh Al Bur'ai***

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* adopted the Sammaniyya litanies which are based on the five basic (*Asas*) litanies. The *Asas* of the Sammaniyya is as follows:<sup>367</sup> **(Table no. 3)**

#### **The Basis of The Sammaniyya Litanies adopted by *Shaikh Al Bur'ai***

<b>Basic litanies (<i>Asas</i>) of The Sammaniyya adopted by Al Bur'ai</b>	<b>Number of <i>Dhikir</i></b>
<i>Istighfar</i> (I beg forgiveness of God)	100 times
<i>Salat 'ala al Rasul</i> (Praying on the Prophet)	100 times
<i>Haiylala or la Ilaha ila Allah</i> (There is no God but Allah)	100 times
<i>Ya Allah</i> (Oh God)	100 times
<i>Ya Hu</i> (Oh God)	100 times

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* stated that the five basic litanies are the most important litanies. He said:

واظب الخمسة و أساس طريقه الخمسة  
Continue doing the basic five litanies of the tariqa.

Other litanies developed by Al Bur'ai are litanies from the Quran: **(Table no. 4)**

<sup>367</sup> Interview with Nur El Din Muhamed Ahmed, 27 years, Khartou, 21 April 2007.

## Litanies From the Quran

Litanies developed by <i>Shaikh Al Bur'ai</i>	Number	Function of litanies
After the <i>Fajr</i> prayer (prayer of early morning)	<i>Surat Yassin</i> ( Holy Quran Chapter 36): one time	For keeping the disciple Save
After <i>Dhuhr</i> prayers (prayers of midday)	<i>Surat Noah</i> (Holy Quran Chapter 71): one time	For increasing income
After the 'Asr Prayers (prayers of afternoon)	<i>Surat Al Naba'</i> (Holy Quran Chapter 78): one time	(function undefined)
After the <i>Maghreb</i> (Sunset prayers)	<i>Surat Al Waq'ia</i> (Holy Quran Chapter 56): one time	For increasing income
After the 'Isha night prayers	<i>Surat Tabarak</i> ( Holy Quran 67): one time	For securing the disciple in the last day

After reciting *Surat Yassin* (Chapter 36) each time, the disciple says the following:

سبحان المنفس عن كل مديون  
سبحان المفرج عن كل محزون  
سبحان من أمره بين الكاف و النون  
سبحان من اذا أراد شيئاً أن يقول له كن فيكون  
يا مفرج الهموم يا حي يا قيوم  
صلّى وسلم على سيدنا محمد و على اله وسلم و اعطنى سؤالي.<sup>368</sup>

Oh Almighty, Who helps any indebted.

Oh Almighty Who cures any sad person

Oh Almighty Whose strength is between the *Kaf* and *Nun*<sup>369</sup>

Blessed God who if wants any thing it will immediately be done

Oh God who releases burdens Oh God the Almighty

Prayers and Peace be upon our master Muhammad (PPBUH) and please give me what I want.

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* added new litanies in addition to the litanies of the Sammaniyya which are centered on reciting *Surat Al Fatiha* (reciting the inauguration of the Quran) they are as following: (**Table no.5**)

Litanies based on reciting <i>al Fatiha</i> developed by <i>Al Bur'ai</i>	Number of recitation of <i>Surat Al Fatiha</i>	Function of litanies
After the <i>Fajr</i> prayers (prayer of early morning)	18 times	Facilitates daily life matters.
After <i>Dhuhr</i> prayers (prayer of midday)	18 times	Facilitates daily life matter.
After the 'Asr Prayers (prayer of afternoon)	18 times	Facilitates daily life matter.

<sup>368</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Burai' al Sudan*, second edition, op.cit., p.236

<sup>369</sup> *Kaf* and *Nun* from the Arabic word كن.

After the <i>Maghreb</i> prayers (prayer of sunset)	18 times	Facilitates daily life matter.
After the <i>Isha</i> prayers (Night prayer)	28 times	Facilitates daily life matter.

It is important to mention that *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai developed his own litanies that are very circulated in Al Zariba. In this point he resembled many Sudanese Sammani *Shaikhs* who developed their own litanies which are more popular and more circulated than the litanies of the founder (Al Sammani) himself. The following is one of the litanies adopted by *Shaikh* Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai and became part of his litanies:

"بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم اللهم صلى على سيدنا محمد و على اله و صحبه و سلم  
الحمد لله رب العالمين. الى الدين اللهم أدخلني في بحر هدايتك و طمطم  
وحدانيتك و قونا بقوة سلطان فردانيتك حتى أخرج الى ساعة فضاء رحمتك و في  
وجهي لمعان برق القرة من أثر هيبتك مهيب بهيبتك قويا بقوتك معزز مكرم  
مبجل معظم بعظمتك و تركية بتزكيتك. ألبسني فايق العزة حتى ألقى القبول  
وأنهجنى بمنهاج الواصلة و الوصول، و توجنى بتاج الكرامات و الوقارات.  
أرزقني في نوائق بيني و بين أحبائك جميع عبادك في دار الدنيا و دار القرار  
و أرزقني من نور أسمك هيبه و سطوة تنقاد لها القلوب و الارواح و تخضع لها  
النفوس و الاجباه يا من ذلت له رقاب الجبابرة، و خضعت له أعناق الاكاسرة، يا  
مالك الدنيا و الآخرة، يا شقمة، يا شقمة، يا شقمة، يا شقمة، يتذكر بتذكير،  
بتدسم بتدسيم ينابيع الحقائق و أصحابه مصابيح الهدى لكل الخلائق صلاة بك  
منك عليه ، مقبولة بفضلك تليق بذاته تقمسنها بها في أنوار تجلياتك، تطهر بها  
قلوبنا، و تقدس بها أسرارنا، و ترق بها أرواحنا، و تغمر بركاتها علينا،  
و مشايخنا ووالدينا و أخواننا و المؤمنين و المسلمين مقرونة بسلام منك الى يوم  
الدين، كل الحمد بك منك في وقت و حين و منى له السلام" <sup>370</sup>

In the name of God the merciful the passionate, O God pray on our Lord Muhammad (PBUH) and his family and his companions. Thanks are to God the Lord of All. To religion God let me enter in the sea of your Guidance and the secret (*tamtam*) of Your Oneness and make us strong with the Strength of Your Oddness (Uniqueness) until I get out to the hour of your Merciful fate and in my face the glittering of Your Strength as a result of Your Highness, High as your Highness, strong with Your Strength, honoured and well seated as a result of Your Highness and refined with your Refinement. Oh God dress me the best of honour until I get acceptance and guide me with discipline of salvation, honour me with crown of miracles and decency. Give me of the light of Your Name a power that be followed by hearts and spirits and that rules selves and faces, Oh God Who ruled the selves of tyrants and Who ruled the evil of brutal, Oh God who owns the world and the world after (*ya shaqma, ya shaqma, ya shaqmait, ya shaqmt, bi tazakur bi tazkir, bi tadsum bi*

<sup>370</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Burai' Al Sudan*., First edition, op.cit., p. 44

*tadsim*)<sup>371</sup> spring of realities and His Companions the candles of guidance for all creatures, a Prayer by You from You upon Him. Accepted with your kindness that suits His Self with it. Oh God make us sink in the Lights of Your appearance, with it purify our hearts, with it bless our secrets, and refine our souls and make its blessings covered us, our *Shaikhs*, our parents, brothers and the faithful people and the Muslim people with Peace from You until the Last Day. All thanks with You and from You in specific time and moment and peace from me to Him”.

The disciples of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* recite *ratib al Naja* and *Hizb al Nawawi* three times per day and the *Basmala* 1111 times in the morning and in the evening.<sup>372</sup> What is meant by these litanies is: a) security, b) fulfilling needs, c) psychological satisfaction and relaxation, d) getting prosperity.

What attracted of the educated middle class to the litanies of *Al Bur'ai* is that they are time saving and high rewarding. Reciting these litanies solve their individual problems. Moreover, these litanies provided the educated middle class with psychological satisfaction and led them to be self-disciplined. However, it is important to mention that those who actually use *Al Bur'ai's* litanies represent smaller circle than the massive poetry circle. This poetry circle includes most Sudanese tribes (tribes from the north and from the South, from the west and from the East), the different classes (upper rich classes and the lower poor classes), but the most dominant is the educated group of the middle class.

One basic element of the popular Sufism that was revived by *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is the visit of the tombs of Sufis. This is very clear in the annual visit to *Al Kiraida* in the White Nile where the tomb of *Shaikh 'Umar* is found. The researcher found that the concept of the *Ziyyara* (visit) is very essential in Sudan and other Muslim countries such as Egypt. Also they are very similar. De Jong in his study of the phenomenon of the *Ziyyara* in Egypt stated that:

“The word *Ziyyara*, meaning literary visit, when used to mean a visit to the tomb of a saint (*wali*), stands for a whole set of prescribed ritual behaviour such as greeting the saint when entering his shrine, reading *al-Fatiha*, touching the *maqsura* around the *tabut* itself, in order to obtain some *baraka* of the saint, presenting a votive offering (*nadhr* pl. *Nudhur*) praying two *rak'as*, and leaving the shrine moving backwards while saying “that God's peace and blessing may be upon you, while performing all this in the proper state of ritual purity.”<sup>373</sup>

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* made of his annual visit to the tomb of *Shaikh Umar* in *Al Kiraida* a sort of annual religious festival that attracts thousands of his disciples in the

<sup>371</sup> All these words are of Syriani dhikr and they have no meanings in Arabic Language or any other language but they have special meanings for Sufis.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid., p.18.

<sup>373</sup> F.De Jong, “ Cairene Ziyyara-Days: A contribution to the Study of Saint veneration in Islam”, *Die Welt des Islams*, New Ser., Vol. 17, no. 1 /4, 1976-1977, p.27.



White Nile and Kordofan and other Sufi orders. This annual visit started during the life time of his father. However, during the leadership of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* it developed into a religious festival for all Sufi orders that overcomes ethnic and class boundaries.

#### 4.7 Some Narrations of *Karamat*

The researcher is aware that narration generally is not required for scientific research that is usually based on analysis. However, here collecting narration of miracle doings (*karamat*) incidents is mainly aimed to show the wide spectrum of popularity of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. These narrations are circulated among different strata, including the educated and happened to be one reason of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*'s popularity throughout the Sudan.

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai*'s father is known of having *karama*. In an interview with *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, he said: *Shaikh Waqi Allah* was going in the desert in order to make *dhikr*, his disciples who accompanied him complained of thirst. While they were walking they found a tree, *Shaikh Waqi' Allah* told them that water is inside this tree. When the disciples check the tree, they found huge amount of water inside the tree.<sup>374</sup> However the most important incident of *karama* of *Shaikh Waqi' Allah* was during the Mahdist era. They were traveling towards the areas of the White Nile, in mid way, a pregnant woman was up to delivery. *Shaikh Waqi' Allah* asked her to follow his steps and say Oh God, then she found her self in front of a house, when *Shaikh Waqi' Allah* knocked on the door asking for a nearby midwife, it happened that it was the house of the midwife where the woman delivered safely.<sup>375</sup> In an interview with *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, he said that his father *Shaikh Waqi' Allah* knew he is going to be killed. He asked *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, "What would you do if someone killed your father? *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* replied "If I killed the whole world for revenge it would not be enough, so I let him free". After few days a mad man who has been cured in Al Zariba killed *Shaikh Waqi' Allah*.<sup>376</sup>

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* never denied the concept of *karama*, but instead he affirmed it. In a daily newspaper he affirmed seeing the *karamas* himself among other Sufis and holymen.<sup>377</sup> According to his son, Al Nour, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* was characterized with divinely fulfilled wishes. Any wishes of him happened to come true. According to him Al Bur'ai's *Karamas* are unaccountable.<sup>378</sup>

In an interview with one of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*'s grandsons, he reported that several *karamas* have been seen by the disciples of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. He told the researcher that once a woman has to make a surgery and the time of the surgery was decided. She was afraid of the surgery and she told her mother about it. Her mother accompanied her to meet *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* touched her stomach later when she went back to the physician he informed her that she is not in need of the surgery.<sup>379</sup>

Another incident that took place at Al Zariba: a man came with one of his bones broken. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* asked him to eat *Kissra* (the Sudanese traditional bread) at his *massed* after sometime the man was cured. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* documented this in his poetry:

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<sup>374</sup> Interview with *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, Al Zariba village, Kordofan, 4 January 2000.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid.

<sup>376</sup> Interview with *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, Al Zariba village, Kordofan, 3 January 2000.

<sup>377</sup> Al Dar newspaper, No.1365, Khartoum, 17 July 1998.

<sup>378</sup> Interview with *Shaikh Al Nour Al Bur'ai*, Khartoum, 28 June 2007.

<sup>379</sup> Interview with Nur Al Din Mohamed Ahmed, Khartoum, 21 April 2007.

With *Kissra* Al Bur'ai cured the broken bones.<sup>380</sup>

*Shaikh* Al Bur'ai has many incidents with Wahabis who denied his ability of making *karamas* or miracles doing. One of the prominent Wahabis in Um Kiraidim, a village in Northern Kordofan, wanted to marry a beautiful girl who used to refuse men. She told him that in order to marry him he has to bring her three meters of the same cloth and material she showed him. He started to search in El Obied, Khartoum, Port Sudan but he failed to find it and gave up. Then some of his relatives wanted to visit Al Zariba they invited him to go with them. He went with them unwillingly. When they arrived, it was the time of the night prayers (*Al I'sha* prayers). The Wahabi gave small amount of money as the purpose of *al ziyara*, though he was in a position to pay more. During the dinner, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai sat near him and he was generous with the man. Then the Wahabi gave *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai another more amount of money, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai refused and told him we take the first small amount as *ziyara*. In the morning while they are leaving *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai gave the Wahabi a present. In the way back home he wanted to see what is the present and he found it the same cloth he was searching for. He was taken by surprise and he married the beautiful girl.<sup>381</sup>

Another incident took place in Cairo, during a visit of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai. He was informed that one of his friends was laying in the intensive care unit unconscious and physicians were helpless in curing his case. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai visited the hospital and he recited something, then his friend awake and he was completely cured. When the Wahabis asked him how he cured the ill persons, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai replied by reciting *Surat al Fatiha* (inauguration of the Quran).<sup>382</sup>

It happened that one person is an addict of snuff, he tried to stop but could not. He met a friend of him (the one who told this story) who astonishingly gave up the habit. He asked him how this happened, the man replied that he went to *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai and told him that he could not give up using snuff, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai advised him to use the leaves of a Sudanese tree (*laloub*) instead of snuff. He used that and he gave up addicting snuff.<sup>383</sup>

Another story is that one of Sudanese pilots was flying from El Obied to Khartoum, a strange movement took place in the plane's engine that shook the plane. The pilot did not know what to do in order to stop this movement and he suspected that the plane is going to fall down and all the passengers will die. Then the plane suddenly became normal. One of the crew of the plane came to the pilot telling him that an old *Shaikh* was reciting *dhikr* with his *sibha* (beans) afterwards the plane became normal. Then the pilot came to the old *Shaikh* and he recognized that he is *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai, afterwards the pilot became one of his disciples.<sup>384</sup>

An incident took place to one of the Sudanese working abroad. He suffered of bad treatment from his director to the extent that he was about to be fired off. He came to Sudan in a vacation. He told his mother about his problem. His mother insisted to go with him to visit Al Zariba and meet *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai

<sup>380</sup> Ibid.

<sup>381</sup> Interview with Nur Al Din Mohamed Ahmed, Khartoum, 21 April 2007.

<sup>382</sup> Interview with Al Maiz Ahmed Idris, Al Thawra-Omdurman, 27 April 2007.

<sup>383</sup> *Karamat* Al Bur'ai available at [www.Sudaneseonline.com](http://www.Sudaneseonline.com), 20 February, 2005.

<sup>384</sup> *Karamat* Al Bur'ai, available at [www.Sudaneseonline.com](http://www.Sudaneseonline.com) 21 Feb. 2005 Muhammad Osman Musa El Haj,

listened to his problem then he recited *surat (chapter) Al Fatia* asking God to solve his problem. When this person went back to the country where he works, he found that a new manager was appointed and he was appointed in a new higher post, later on he became very rich.<sup>385</sup>

A person went with his wife to Al Zariba in order to meet *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. After meeting him he wanted to leave early in the morning. Hundreds were present at the *maseed*. When saying good bye *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* asked the man why he did not drink the milk. The person was astonished how did he know that while he was among hundreds who were present at the *maseed*.<sup>386</sup>

An incident was told by *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* that when he visited *Shaikh Al Tom wad Bannaqa* in Al 'Azaza, he put his hands to touch the tomb, then a fire came out, those who accompanied him went out quickly, but *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* thought that this fire are spiritual lights that gave him spiritual push.<sup>387</sup>

An informant in Omdurman told the researcher that she dreamed that she saw *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* telling her that a death will happen in her family, after three days her sister died suddenly. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* came to this family in order to pay condolence.<sup>388</sup>

A story was told that an engineer of a Tunisian mother and Belgium father visited his Sudanese friends in Tunisia and found a picture of a Sudanese man, then he repeatedly dreamed of this man inside a beautiful garden. Then he came and asked his friends about the person in the picture, they told him that he is a Sufi *Shaikh* from Sudan and his name is *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. Then he decided to come to Sudan where he met *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* in Al Zariba where he stayed until he memorized the whole Quran.<sup>389</sup>

Another incident of *karama*, there was a disciple of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* who got sick, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* asked his colleagues to give him dates after washing them. When the disciple ate them he became well. Another disciple got ill and the disciples gave him dates after washing them, but he did not become well. When they went to *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, he told them to give him the dates without washing them, and the man became well. *Al Bur'ai* told his disciples that there should be a permission first for any treatment.<sup>390</sup>

In 2000, when the researcher first went to Al Zariba for a visit, the driver who took her from El Obied to Al Zariba told her that few months ago, came a blind woman from the United Arab Emirate, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* asked her to stay in the *maseed*. After a week, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* asked about her, he was told that she is still staying. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* asked firmly to take her out of Al Zariba to El Obied right now. The driver was astonished, but told the woman to get her things and put them in the car quickly. After twenty minutes from al Zariba, there was strong thunder storm and a severe lightening that shocked the woman in her eyes, immediately the woman saw and she cried of joy. The driver told the researcher that instead of going to El Obied I took the woman back to Al Zariba to tell *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* that the woman was cured by the lightening caused by thunder storm.<sup>391\*</sup>

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<sup>385</sup> Ibid.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid.

<sup>387</sup> *Al Sahafa fi Hadhrat Al Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, available at :

<http://www.alsahafa.info/index.php?type=3&id=2147484364>

<sup>388</sup> Interview with Al Maiz Ahmed Idris, Al Thawra-Omdurman, 28 February 2008.

<sup>389</sup> *Karamat Al Bur'ai*, available at [www.Sudanese.com](http://www.Sudanese.com), 21 Feb. 2005 Muhammad Osman Musa El Haj.

<sup>390</sup> Interview with Haju Bannaqa Haju, Khartoum, 17 September 2007.

<sup>391</sup> Interview with Al Zariba's Ford driver, Al Zariba village, 3 January 2000.

Another incident of *karama* narrated by El Boni and Saied is that an official working in Civil Aviation was responsible for El Obied Airport. An aeroplane was supposed to come to El Obeid from El Fashir in order take El Obied passengers to Khartoum. A message was received that the aeroplane is broken and the flight will be delayed. Therefore, the officer asked all the passengers to leave the airport as the aeroplane is not coming. All the passengers left except some Sufis. After some time the officer came and ordered them firmly to leave the airport. The old man (who is *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*) told him that the aeroplane will come and we will fly to Khartoum. The officer was very angry thinking to take them out by police. Few minutes later a message was received that the aeroplane from Al Fashir-El Obied-Khartoum is approaching the airport. He tried to contact some of the passengers but few of them knew that the aeroplane came. The Sufi man and his disciples sat on the business seats and the officer knew that the old Sufi is *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. Since then he became one of his disciples.<sup>392</sup>

Another *karama* incident is told in Al Zariba that while *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* was a child he met a woman who was taking her Sorghum to the flour mill. He took small amount out of her basket, but the woman succeeded in freeing his hands from that small amount of Sorghum. When the woman arrived into the flour mill and she put her sorghum in it, the mill did not work, she tried several time but failed. At last they brought the child (later *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*) and let him take some amount of Sorghum, immediately the flour mill worked and the woman took her flour.<sup>393</sup>

Another incident is that *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* was travelling by small aeroplane to Al Zariba from Khartoum in 2003. In the midway, something wrong happened in the engine. The Russian pilot told *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* that they have to make landing in El Halba area which is the land of Shiwaihat tribe. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* told the pilot to continue until reaching Al Zariba. They continued and nothing happened to the aeroplane. As a result of this incident the Russian captian turned into Islam.<sup>394</sup> The same informant told the researcher that once among the visitors came a father and his son who was not able to walk and who came sitting on a chair. After listening to different visitors, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* asked the boy to go and bring him some water. The boy's father told him that his son can not walk, as he is paralyzed. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* repeated his demand again and again the boy's father told him that his son can not walk. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* asked the son to go and bring him some water, then the boy stood up and went in order to bring him water. The boy was cured completely.<sup>395</sup>

In one of his trips from Khartoum to Saudi Arabia by aeroplane, something wrong took place and the captian told the passengers to be ready for forced landing. Every body was afraid, then some of the passengers asked *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* to do something. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* asked all the passengers to say I beg forgiveness to God

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\* The researcher found that almost every one in Sudan knows *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. After a small car accident in 2002, the researcher went to Khartoum police center where she had to complete the legal procedures. The Head officer told the researcher that one of his colleagues suffered severe pain in his back. Physicians asked him to make X rays in which they found cancer in his back. He was supposed to go to Jordan to make a surgery. Before that they took him to *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* who was in Khartoum at that time. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* touched his back and told him not to worry. The officer had to continue his travel procedures. He had to make another X rays, surprisingly the physician found that the cancer disappeared and it was a surprise for all his colleagues.

<sup>392</sup> El Boni and Saied, op.cit., pp.44-45.

<sup>393</sup> Ibid., p.45.

<sup>394</sup> Interview with Khalid Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai, Khartoum, 4 November 2007.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid.

(*istighfar*). They continued doing it for a while. After that the plane landed peacefully in Saudi Arabia.<sup>396</sup>

One of Al Bur'ai's cousins, who lives in Al Zariba, said that she had an infected Thyroidal gland and it was painful. She went to a physician who advised her to have a surgery, then she met *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai who told her to stay in the *maseed* for one day. In the morning he touched her neck with his fingers deeply. After that she felt that the pain disappeared and her neck became normal. She showed the researcher her neck which appears almost normal.<sup>397</sup>

The researcher is not concerned whether the *karama* is real or not, but is concerned with the social role of *karama* among the educated middle class. The stories of *karama* are quickly circulated among the educated class. It led to the popularity of Al Bur'ai. Also it gives the educated class a feeling of possibility of solving their problem on individual bases. In a country where medical treatment became dependent on one's financial ability and employment depends on personal relations to a large extent one expects that resorting to *karama* is an effective weapon. The social role of *karama* also led to the transformation of the one believed to be holy into a charismatic leader.

According to *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai, the concept of *karama* is evident in the Holy Qu'ran, specifically in Chapter 27 (*Surat al Naml*) and in the story of queen Balqis with Prophet Solomon. In an interview made by Al Sahafa newspaper, Al Bur'ai said:

الكرامات

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In an interview with *Al Sahafa* newspaper, he said that the evidence of *Karama* is given by the story of queen Bilqis and Prophet Solomon who asked his audience to bring her thrown to him, a holy man said he is able to bring it before he looks again.<sup>399</sup>

This stand of Al Bur'ai paved the way for his own *karamas*, as he is known in addition to his poetry by his abilities of *karama* making. He said

<sup>396</sup> Ibid.

<sup>397</sup> Interview with Al Sara Mohamed, Khartoum, 21 May 2007.

<sup>398</sup> *fi Hadhrat Al Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, available at:  
<http://www.alsahafa.info/index.php?type=3&id=2147484364>

<sup>399</sup> Ibid.

“Make sure that the holymen have ability of miracles doing  
Any one who deny this fact, stop talking with him.”

The miracle doer has a multi-facet role in the society. To define *awliya* as *Shari*’ Sufis or orthodox-mystics would simply to play down another, extremely important dimension of their multifaceted image, that of the miracle working. Their characterization as charismatic figures, and the extensive description of their *karamat* point to the interweaving of “orthodox” and “popular” religion in the figure of the *wali*. In Morocco, for example, it was due to his manifested spiritual virtues that the *wali* acquired the qualifications to become holy; the miracles he performed are presented as but a natural result of his outstanding virtues. This is probably why, rather than presented separately, the accounts of the *awliya*’ miraculous deeds are intertwined with those attesting to their spiritual perfections. Such construction of the sacred biography was probably designed to refine and regulate the belief in saintly miracles shared by all Moroccan Muslims of al-Tadili’s time-educated or uneducated, rulers or scholars, pastoral, villagers, or town dwellers.<sup>400</sup>

In Sudan according to Trimingham, belief in holy-men, both living (*shuyukh* or *fuqara*) and dead (*awliya* or *salihin*) and their cult, all came ready-made to the Sudan, where it found fertile field for its reception; for the Sudanese entered into the cult with an enthusiasm which formal observance could never evoke.<sup>401</sup> The belief in the extra-ordinary abilities of the Sufi *Shaikhs* is well established in the Sudanese culture. The book of Wad Daif Allah is a good reference to the dominance of the cult of miracles. The saints of the Sudan are innumerable and most of them are indigenous. Their names spring immediately to the people’s lips at the times of illness, disasters and danger. Pilgrimages are constantly made to their shrines both to show reverence and to receive a share of the blessing (*l’t-tabarruk*).<sup>402</sup> Trimingham talked about different types of super-natural abilities of the Sudanese Sufi *Shaikhs* dominated in the Funj era. He got the information from the Tabaqat Wad Daif Allah. Trimingham summarized these abilities as follows:

- 1-Healing abilities, usually by ‘*azima* (spitting).
- 2-*Mukashafat* (unveiling, divination) which is knowing of hidden things, thoughts, the future, clairvoyance, telepathic gifts.
- 3-Metamorphosis of themselves, or others or things e.g he is a *faki* (saint) who can curdle water.
- 4-Power over elements, levitation, walking on water, control over animals and inanimate objects.<sup>403</sup>

*Shaikh* Al Bur’ai could be considered as a typical example of the above-mentioned abilities. He played the role of ‘*Alim* who teaches the disciples, he was a *Khatib* who preaches the Islamic teachings in the different prayers and he was a typical *karama*-maker who was able to cure thousands who came to him seeking to be cured from illnesses. He was able to cure cancer, insanity, AIDS, Malaria, Head ache, etc.<sup>404</sup> Being a miracle doer, *Shaikh* al-Burai’ was transformed into a charismatic leader. Charisma has been used in three senses:

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<sup>400</sup> Daphna Ephrat, “In Quest of an Ideal Type of Saint: Some Observations on the First Generation of Moroccan *Awliya*’ Allah in “Kitab Al-tashawwuf””, *Studia Islamica*, No.94, 2002, p.77.

<sup>401</sup> Trimingham, op.cit., 129

<sup>402</sup> Ibid

<sup>403</sup> For more information see: Ibid, pp.136-138.

<sup>404</sup> Interview with Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, nephew of *Shaikh* Al Bur’ai., Khartoum, 13 May 2006.

1-In the classic Weberian sense of the supernatural endowment of the leader. The leader has a divine gift which he demonstrates to his followers by miracles, signs or proofs.

2-Charisma is used by Weber and others to refer to a sacred or awe-filled property of groups, roles or objects.

3-Charisma is used in the popular (secular) sense to refer to the personal qualities of a leader: the leader is a "Charismatic personality" who attracts a following on the basis of his personal attributes as opposed to divine gift.<sup>405</sup>

Trimingham could be the first to denote the dominance of belief in *awliya* among the *effendiyya*. He stated that:

To day, inspite of the spread of modern education, there has been almost no diminution in saint-worship. Some of the *effendiya*, it is true such as Gordon College graduates and also the ultra-orthodox may scoff at it, but to the masses belief in the saints and the efficacy of their *baraka* with all that this involves of powers of intercession and miracles, is the essence of their religious life. Even the *effendi* has no control over the *harim* and would on no account refuse to allow his son to be ornamented with the charms of some pious *feki* nor would he throw away his own *hijab*.<sup>406</sup>

#### 4.8 *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* and Healing Activities

The Sufis are high rank spiritual teachers within Islam, whose one of their responsibilities is to maintain and transmit the hidden, deeper knowledge contained in the Holy Qur'an. For the Sufis, the supreme object of life is to serve and obey God, to emulate His Divine attributes, and thereby to earn His pleasure. Among the service to humanity, that the Sufis consider superior to all others is the healing of the sick. Their method is called the Sufi Healing. There are four kinds of healing methods:

1. Modern
2. Traditional (acupuncture, herb remedies, etc.)
3. Spiritism (yoga, magnetism, hypnotism, breath exercise, etc.)
4. Divine Spiritual Power

The Islamic Sufi healing method uses Divine spiritual power practiced exclusively by the Sufis for centuries. The basic principle in Sufi healing is that the True Healer is God Himself, the Sufis only act as mediators. The physical healing methods of the Sufis are derived first from the Holy Qur'an and second from the traditions and actions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Sufis use four things in their treatment of diseases: prayers, medicine, by practicing something, or using specific things. Traditional medicine or therapy (water therapy, aromatherapy, etc.) sometimes also used by the Sufis depending on the condition of the patient. *Dhikr*, simply translated as "Divine remembrance", is also practiced as a method to cure

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<sup>405</sup> Martin E. Spencer, "What is Charisma", *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol.24, No.3, Sept. 1973, p.341.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid.

mental or physical illness. It is performed by repeating holy verses or God's attributes either individually or in a group, usually under supervision of a Sufi teacher.<sup>407</sup> These abilities are based on Prophetic medicine that is found in the Prophetic traditions (*Hadith*). There are many collections of the traditional sayings of Prophet Muhamed on the subject of medicine. Some of these sayings lie buried among collected sayings on various other subjects. Some collections are made of sayings (Hadith) only on medical subjects.<sup>408</sup>

The researcher found that the phenomenon of spiritual healing is wide spread throughout the Islamic countries. Some of these healing methods used to be known even before of the advent of Islam and it has been Islamicized and became part of the Islamic methods. For example, despite the Muslim hegemony which was established over a large section of Central Asia after the seventh century, many pre-Islamic Shamanic practices survived. Among the Kazkhs these pre-Islamic rituals were known as *baqshi*. They were said to have been able to cure illness, foretell the future and combat the malicious influence of evil spirit. Following the Kazakhs's acceptance of Islam in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such Shamanic practices were taken up by the Mullah or Muslim religious guides<sup>409</sup>

The Turkmen who governed the area, had many Shamanistic beliefs, several of which persist in Afghan as *bakshi*. It is found that while curing illness, foretelling the future, they used to beat drums, enter into trances and invoke Allah, Adam and Noah and other members of the "biblical-Quranic pantheon".<sup>410</sup> It is found that a Shaman is a magician healer, Psycholopomp, priest, mystic, poet and performer of miracles.<sup>411</sup> Therefore, the researcher found that the phenomenon of miracle doer is not confined to Arab societies only, it is also found in non-Arabic Islamic communities.

*Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was famous for healing abilities. This in part was inherited from his father *Shaikh* Waqi' Allah. *Shaikh* Waqi' Allah was famous of curing insane people.<sup>412</sup> The start of this growing phenomenon came as a result of the reputation of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai as provider of healing abilities. In his discussion of this phenomenon among the Tijaniyya order in western Sudan, Al Karsani states:

"One can not conclude a discussion of the economy of class formation without referring to some of the traditional Tijani occupations in Sudan, such as *fakis*, and medical practitioners. These activities which are based on the order's *asrar* (secrets) and knowledge of medical treatment, were in fact of supreme importance in the expansion of the order in many parts of Sudan".<sup>413</sup>

<sup>407</sup> "Sufi Healing : HIV/AIDS Treatment with the Sufi Healing Methods", an article available at: [www.all-natural.com/Sufi.html](http://www.all-natural.com/Sufi.html).

<sup>408</sup> Cyril El Good, "Tibb-ul-Nabbi or Medicine of the Prophet", *Osiris*, Vol. 14, 1962, p. 40.

<sup>409</sup> M.H. Sidky, "Malang", Sufis and Mystics: An Ethnographic and Historical Study of Shamanism in Afghanisatan", *African Folklore Studies*, Vo. 49, No.2., 1990, pp.276-277.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid., p.278.

<sup>412</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Burai' Al Sudan: Waqafat ala Shati' Irthihi wa Harthihi*, Al Asbat centre, Khartoum, 2000, p.21.

<sup>413</sup> Awad al-Sid Al Saied Musatafa Al Karsani, "The Tijaniyya Order in Western Sudan: a Case Study of Khursi, An Nahud and Al Fasher", Ph. D thesis, Department of Political Science, University of Khartoum, July 1985, p.207.



Al Karsani states that the *faki's* or the healer's etiology and treatment of diseases along religious lines fall within the traditional belief which does not separate science from religion.<sup>414</sup> He went further to elucidate that the relation between disease conceptualization and religion illustrates the importance of the *faki* or the healer. The status and the income of the healer in his society depend on his inherited fame, the number and kind of diseases he treats, his thorough knowledge and exploitation of local plants and their use for his prescription. These characteristics made the healers' job hereditary. Sometimes a *faki* who is also an instructor and a healer would reveal to a genuine disciple the composition of some prescriptions. This kind of treatment offered within the precaution "the disciple is not authorized to pass the secrets to others, even within his nuclear family"<sup>415</sup>

This glorification of healing abilities of Al Bur'ai, according to the researcher, is caused partly by the retreat of the state from providing medical care. According to UNICEF report 2005, in the period (1992-2003) only 8% of the total budget of the Sudan government is allotted to medical care. While 28% of the budget is allotted to defense in the period (1992-2003).<sup>416</sup> Under such conditions, large and growing number of Sudanese population can not afford getting medical care from hospitals and thus they refer to Sufi *Shaikhs* in order to cure them. Thousands of visitors of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai came to him in order to be cured from illnesses that could be cured in hospitals.

It is mentioned that, using Prophetic medicine *Shaikh* Al-Burai' was able to heal the difficult illnesses such as AIDS and cancer. A princess from United Arab Emirates was healed from cancer by *Shaikh* Al-Burai' and she is living up to the date of writing of this thesis.<sup>417</sup> Also thousands were healed from different illnesses by the blessings of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai. These healing abilities attracted to him large number of Sudanese and non-Sudanese who came to him seeking healing. Those who came to see him seeking healing either have seen medical doctors and were not able to be cured or were unable to go to medical physicians because the latter are financially un-accessible to them. The last part represents the majority.

*Shaikh* Al Bur'ai depended on blessing in curing diseases. It is claimed that this ability of healing is caused by the *baraka* of the holy man. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai had documented these abilities in the following poem:

للمرضى تفلّى نافع  
وبخرتى و حجابى  
دوما لهم أباشر  
غير عزلة و احتجاب  
للسائلين عنى  
و الطارقين بابى<sup>418</sup>

For those who are ill, my spitting, *bakhra* and *hijab* are useful  
I always welcome them without hiding myself.  
I am always available for those who ask about me and those who knock my door

<sup>414</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>415</sup> Ibid., pp. 210-211.

<sup>416</sup> UNICEF, Basic Indicators, "Status of Children in the World 2005: Threatened Childhood", UNICEF Report, 2004, p.106.

<sup>417</sup> Interview with nephew of *Shaikh* Al-Burai', Abdel Rahim Haj Ahamd, Khartoum, 13 May 2006.

<sup>418</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmad, *Burai' al Sudan: Waqafat ala Shati' Irthihi wa Harthihi*, Al Asbat Centre, Khartoum, 2000, p.61.

In an interview with Ex-director of Sudan Airways office in London, the researcher was told that the director in early 1990s suffered a continuous headache that could not be cured. In a visit of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* to London he contacted the director to help him in traveling procedures back to Sudan. In the airport and while he was saying good buy to him he was in great pain of headache. But he did not tell *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* about it. Yet, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* told him that “give me your head, you suffered a lot from this headache” and he touched his head saying some words of *dhikr*. Immediately he felt that the pain disappeared and he became normal ever since.<sup>419</sup>

#### 4.9 *Shaikh Al Bur'ai's Relations with Other Sammaniyya Centres*

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* has strong relations with all Sufis of the Sudan. He said :

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I love all the Saints  
I do not differentiate between one and another  
But the *Shaikh* of my order among them  
Has a status could only be interpreted by those who have gnostic knowledge.

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* has a distinct relationship with the Sammaniyya center of Al Kiraida. He had special and strong ties with *Shaikh Muhamad Ahmed* of the Kiraida in the White Nile. *Shaikh Muhamad Ahmed* is the grandson of *Shaikh Umar Mohamed al Safi* who was the master of *Al Bur'ai's* father *Mohamed Wagi' Allah*. As argued before it was this center that announced the succession of *Al Bur'ai* to his father instead of his brother *Al Nour*.<sup>421</sup> For this reason, *Al Bur'ai* continued the annual visits to Al Kiraida that started during the life of his father before one hundred years. During *Al Bur'ai's* life, this annual visit became something like a pilgrimage visit due to hundreds who attend this visit in Al Kiraida. This visit became similar to a national festival to all Sufi *tariqas* in Sudan.<sup>422</sup> In his going back to Al Zariba *Al Bur'ai* used to pass by Shabasha of *Shaikh Birair wad Al Hussain* of the Sammaniyya *tariqa* in the white Nile area. And then to Al Sifairayya of *Shaikh Hamza ibn Shaikh Ahmed*.<sup>423</sup> This annual visit of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* to Al Kiraida coincided with making the *Holliyya* of *Shaikh Umar* (founder of Al Kiraida town). According to Trimingham, the *Mulid* or *Holliyya* of a saint is the great village festival. Each year at the birth or death, the inhabitants will be seen arriving at the tomb carrying their offerings. If it is famous saint, they will come from the whole area.<sup>424</sup>

<sup>419</sup> Interview with an Ex-Officer in Sudan Airways, 27 April 2006, London.

<sup>420</sup> *Al Sahafa fi Hadhrat Al Bur'ai* available at:  
<http://www.alsahafa.info/index.php?type=3&id=2147484364>

<sup>421</sup> Ibid., p.80.

<sup>422</sup> Ibid.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid., p.94.

<sup>424</sup> J. T. Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in the Sudan*, Frank Cass, London, 1965, p.146.

The writer is concerned with the influence of the Sammaniyya order of *Shaikh* ‘Umar Haj al Saffi in the White Nile. Al Kiraida where *Shaikh* Umar lived is located on the west shore of Al Kawa town and was found in 1907 by *Shaikh* Umar Muhamad Abd Allah Al Safi who was a Sammani *Shaikh*. His genealogy goes back to Hassan wad Hussuna, the famous Qadiri *Shaikh* who lived during the Funj Sultanate. *Shaikh* Umar was initiated into the Sammaniyya *tariqa* by *Shaikh* Birair Al Hussan in Shabasha.<sup>425</sup> Moreover, it is significant to mention that this branch of the Sammaniyya follow the Sufi chain “*silsila*” of the Ya’qubab through *Shaikh* Birair of Shabasha (near al Diwaim town).

*Shaikh* Birair was one of the celebrated disciples of *Shaikh* Muhammad Al-Tom wad Bannaqa. His name is Birair B. Al-Hussien b. Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Suliman. It is claimed that his genealogy referred to al-‘Abass, uncle of Prophet Muhammad. He was born in 1823 at the early days of the Turco-Egyptian rule and died in 1885, at the early days of the Mahdist state. His family lived in eastern Ruf’aa, near Wad al-Khabir, later they moved to the area north of Um Ru’waba and eastern Bara. *Shaikh* Birair recited Quran under the guidance of Muhammd wad Kunan, in western Wad Medani and studied Mukhtasar Khalil under *Shaikh* Ahmad Al-Rayah in Abu Haraz in Gezira. After that he was initiated into the Sammaniyya *tariqa* by Muhammad Al-Tom Wad Bannaqa who authorized him to initiate people into the Sammaniyya. He settled in wad al-Zaki east of the White Nile. Then he moved to the west bank where he established his centre in Shabasha north of El-Diewm. The centre included a *maseed* and *Khalwai* for studying Islamic sciences. The significance of this centre is that it shows the impact of the Y’aqubab in a wide range of an area in the Gezira. Moreover, it reflects some aspects of the scholar nature of those initiated by the Y’aqubab.<sup>426</sup> As said, the Ya’qubab has their Sufi origin in the Qadiriyya *tariqa*. The whole Y’aqubab in the eighteenth century converted into the Sammaniyya from the Qadiriyya *tariqa*. The use of *noba* (African drum) in the center of *Shaikh* Al Bur’ai is a prove of this Qadiri influence.

Al Bur’ai has special ties with the Sammaniyya centers in Tabat in the Gazira and with the centre Sammaniyya center of Omdurman during the leadership of *Shaikh* Al Fatih Qarib Allah. The later has visited al Zariba. In attending the funeral of *Shaikh* Al Fatih, *Shaikh* Al Bur’ai made the following poems:

و اليوم ينتقل الإمام الأكبر	أمسى الزمان معجلاً بخيارنا
الذى أخباره بين العوالم تنتشر	أعنى الهمام الفاتح الحبر
و به العلوم لقد توارت أبحر	عجباً لقبر قد تضمّن أمة
و الأرض ذات الصدع ثم الأنهر	وعليه ذات الرجوع يومئذ بكت
محرا به لصلاته و المنبر	و النجم بفقده إذا جنّ الدجى
و عليه رضوان الإله الأكبر	فعليه من رب الخلائق رحمة
يا رب للحسن الخليفة تمطر	و أذن لسحب الخير منك تفضل
يأتى على قدر لفقدك يحضر	يا فاتح المغلوق إن محبكم
للسالكين عيونها تتفجر <sup>427</sup>	فأمنن عليه بشربة قدسية

Time is quickly passing with our best  
who passed away is the highest Imam  
I mean Al Fatih, the active whose  
News are known throughout the world

<sup>425</sup> Available at the Burhaniyya web site.

<sup>426</sup> For more information see Amani M.El Obeid, “The Sammaniyya *Tariqa*...”, op.cit, pp.154-164.

<sup>427</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, op.cit, pp.65-67.

I am astonished for a grave that contains a nation  
 And the sciences are hide  
 For his death all the earth is crying and the rivers  
 The stars are missing him during the night, missing his prayers  
 May God bless him and accept him  
 Oh God permit the clouds of goodness  
 for his successor Hassan pour the water  
 Oh Opener of the closed, Your beloved is coming for Your missing  
 Please give him sacred drink for the disciples.

The biographer of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai mentioned that *Shaikh* Qarib Allah Abu Salih the founder of the Sammaniyya center of Omdurman visited Al Zariba during the leadership of *Shaikh* Wagi' Allah.<sup>428</sup> The researcher thinks that this incident most probably took place because *Shaikh* Qarib Allah spent a long time of his life in Kordofan. This fact could be verified by the statement that *Shaikh* Qarib Allah in 1887 during the era of Khalifa Abdullahi traveled to his brother Al-Bashir at An-Nahud town in Western Sudan. Then he went to live in Fashir and to Al-'Udiyya and he settled in Um Bel in *dar* Hamar. He also settled in Um Badir in northern Kordofan, where the Kababish tribe turned into followers of the Sammaniyya *tariqa*.<sup>429</sup> From here it is quiet possible that *Shaikh* Qarib Allah visited Al Zariba. The good relations with Omdurman center continued during the lifetime of *Shaikh* Hasan Al Fatih Qarib Allah, who celebrated the poetry of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai as well as celebrating *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai himself, awarding him Doctorate of Hounour in Omdurman University while he was the Vice-Chancellor. The relationship of Al Bur'ai with the family and grandsons of Ahmad Al Tayyib Al Bashir could be shown in the following poem:

أعنى بذاك الطيبين أنمتى	سفن النجاة لكل عبد مسلم
شم العرائن الذين تبوؤا	دار المقامة فى الديانة يا سمي
طابت محلتهم و طاب جوارهم	و الطيبون همو خليلي فاعلم
فليفخر السودان أجمعه بمن	كانو ملوكا للكيان بلا دم
و استعبدوا طوعا بنات قلوبنا	بالدين و الديان لا بالدرهم <sup>430</sup>

I mean the Tayyibin my lords, the savior ships for any Muslim  
 Those who achieved the highest stage in religion  
 Their houses are good and being their neighbours is good and they are my dearests  
 Let the whole Sudan be proud with whom who were kings of all peoples  
 They enslaved our hearts with religion and behaviour and not with money.

Another important visit to Al Zariba Sammani centre is the visit of the grandson of Muhammad ibn Abdel Karim al Samman, *Shaikh* Abdel Qadir al Jaili in the early 1970s.<sup>431</sup> The researcher thinks that this visit could be facilitated by the

<sup>428</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>429</sup> Amani M. El Obeid, op.cit., p.154.

<sup>430</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmad, *Burai' Al Sudan*, op.cit., p.83.

<sup>431</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, op.cit., p.60.

Sammani center in Omdurman and it is also a recognition of the status of Zariba center.

Another important figure and with whom *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai had a strong and special ties is *Shaikh* Mohamed Al Rayah al Sanhoury who lived in the Kababish area. *Shaikh* Mohamed al Rayah al Sanhoury known as being a *karama* maker and a *wali*<sup>432</sup> The Sanahir family, whose grandfather was a disciple of *Shaikh* Ahmed Al Tayyib Al Bashir, used to be known as having the secret of healing, i.e. they inherited the secret of healing from Ahmad Al Tayyib Al Bashir. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai has written special poems celebrating *Shaikh* Mohamed Al Rayah al Sanhoury. He said:

ود الريح ياناس قال لى

سير لمولاك عدیل غیر لى

لا تخاف من شى

غير الله وأطوى صباح و عشى<sup>433</sup>

Wad El Raiyyah said to me go straight  
Do not feel afraid from any thing but God  
and do your prayers in the morning and night

It is clear that, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai managed to consolidate his relations with all influential Sufi orders in Sudan by making poetry on most of the known Sufi figures. According to his biographer, in addition to the Sammaniyya and Qadiriyya centres he has also strong relations with the Mirghani family and the Khatmiyya *tariqa*.<sup>434</sup> He also had strong relations with the different centers of the Qadiriyya orders. Such as the 'Arakiyyin, *Shaikh* El Obeid Wad Badur (the *Badrab*), the center of *Shaikh* Al Ja'ali, the center of *Shaikh* Hasan wad Hasuna and the center of Obaidhab.<sup>435</sup> These relations led *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai to be acceptable from all Sufi orders.

Though *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai started as an individual Sammani *Shaikh* (an individual *faki*) but later developed his own doctrine that accepts the doctrines of all Sufi *tariqas* in Sudan. He developed a doctrine that became a representative of all Sudanese Sufi *tariqas*. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was a Sammani *Shaikh* but was able to initiate disciples in different *tariqas* other than the Sammaniyya. He got *ijaza* (license) in three Sufi *tariqas*: the Tijaniyya, the Qadiriyya and the Khatmiyya. This fact enabled him to initiate different disciples into different *tariqas* such as the Sammaniyya, the Qadiriyya, the Tijaniyya and the Khatmiyya *tariqas*.<sup>436</sup>

According to the former informant, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai used to ask the disciple about his family Sufi initiation. If he found that his family is linked to the Tijaniyya *tariqa* for example, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai initiates the disciple into the Tijaniyya *tariqa*. The disciple continues to be a disciple of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai while he is performing Tijani litanies and not the Sammani ones. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was very unique in this step. As it is very rare to find multi-facet form Sufi *tariqas*. The acceptance of the

<sup>432</sup> Interview with *Shaikh* Mohamed Al Rayah Al Sanhoury, Omdurman, December 1995.

<sup>433</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Buari*, op.cit., p.83.

<sup>434</sup> Ibid. P.84.

<sup>435</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, op.cit, p.70.

<sup>436</sup> Interview with Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, Omdurman-Ombadda, 25 December 2007.

doctrine of the Sudanese Sufi orders by *Shaikh* Al-Bur'ai established his popularity all over the Sudan that transcended even Sufi loyalties.

#### 4.10 Why *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is considered a moderate Sufi *Shaikh*?

The moderation of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is reflected in two main elements: 1) his glorification of *karamat*. 2) his dealing with women. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was not outside the boundaries of the Islamic law (*Shari'a*). However, he adopted the concept of *Karama* as a basic concept in his doctrine as we have seen in this chapter. Simplicity and his moderation are the basic characteristics of his own doctrine. He revived a typical Sudanese Sufism that overcame the family boundaries, class boundary and tribal boundary.

Under the *Ingazh* government and specially in the first five years, family life was to be regulated by the *Shari'a*, and the role of women was strictly defined, including dress, conditions of employment and relations between sexes. There was a crackdown on women at work in the name of defending an Islamic conception of the family and the numbers of women active in professions dropped sharply.<sup>437</sup> President Al Bashir stated that the ideal Sudanese woman "should take care of herself, her children, her home, her reputation, and her husband." The family code (1991) not only enshrined *Shari'a* provisions for inheritance, divorce, and child custody but further limited women's rights.<sup>438</sup> *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai never asked women to wear *Hijab*, nor he called for segregation between men and women. According to *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai women are respected and they can participate in *dhikr*.<sup>439</sup> In his poetry he advised his audience to treat women gently. In an interview with Al Bur'ai about the visit of the famous Egyptian writer 'Aisha bint Al Shat'i, he replied that woman can achieve *willaya* or '*Ilm* as the Qur'an did not separate men and women with regard to acquiring science. It is preferable that women can acquire high scientific status.<sup>440</sup> Moreover, he tried to solve the problem of women marriage by building huge charity project for this reason. However, he adopted polygamy for solving the problem of women marriage. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai support of women did not reach being conscious of gender issues. This could be attributed to his rural background.

The moderate stance of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai towards women put him in confrontation with other Islamic factions. In fact he confronted Islamic fanaticism, the thing that put him in confrontation with Wahabism inside and outside Sudan. This point will be explained in the coming chapter. The simplicity in his attitude towards his disciples, men and women, made the doctrine of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai a tolerant one.

#### 4.11 Conclusion

*Shaikh* Al Bur'ai started as a Sammani individual *Shaikh* but later developed a doctrine that tried to represent all Sufi *tariqas* in Sudan. This is clear in his initiation

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<sup>437</sup> Gabriel Warbur, *Islam, Sectarianism and Politics in Sudan Since the Mahdiyya*, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003, p.211

<sup>438</sup> Ann Mosely Lesh, *The Sudan-Contested National Identities*, Indiana University Press, 1998. p.111

<sup>439</sup> From the field trips, the researcher realized that women in Al Zariba wear the Sudanese dress *Toube* only and they are not wearing *hijab*. Moreover, women are allowed to stand by the circle of *dhikr*. There was not severe segregation between men and women. However *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was not as liberal as the Burhaniyya *tariqa* where neither the *toube* nor the *hijab* is dominating.

<sup>440</sup> *fi Hadhrat Al Bur'ai*, Al Sahafa newspaper, Issue no. 3707, 11 September 2003.

of disciples into different Sufi *tariqs*. However, these disciples continue to be Shaikh Al Bur'ai's disciples. It is clear that there is an open edged Sufi order as there is no *baiyy'a* for all who follow his litanies and offices. Any follower of his litanies or poetry is considered as his son. This suits the middle class which wished to get rid of strict bureaucratic and economic systems. The doctrine of the Sammaniyya *tariqa*, from which *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai originated connotes individualism i.e. each disciple can be a *Shaikh* of himself and can make his own litanies. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai adopted different litanies from other Sufi sources and made them his daily litanies.

The doctrine of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai represents a moderate Sufi doctrine. He was not outside the boundaries of the Islamic law (*Shari'a*). Al Bur'ai combined the essence of Sudanese Sufism found in the descriptions of Wad Dhayf Allah in the eighteenth century with the characteristics of the Sufi-Scholar compromise of the neo-Sufi *tariqas* of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Therefore he managed to establish a moderate Sudanese Sufi *tariqa* that overcome all the boundaries and it attracted members of the educated Sudanese middle class.

The most important factor in the development of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai in addition to his litanies is his reputation as *karama* maker and one who possesses *baraka*. Possession of *karama* abilities and miracle doing is considered the main reason of the transformation of a saint into a charismatic figure.

What is interesting in the case of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is that he revived religiosity of Sufism among large sections of the educated sectors of the middle class by reviving Sudanese Sufi values. The glorification of healing abilities of Al Bur'ai, according to the researcher, is caused partly by the retreat of the state from providing free medical care.

In fact *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was a whole institution, curing the sick persons, making reconciliation between the different conflicting Sudanese tribes, helping the youth to get married, helping the people to overcome poverty by giving them means of production, digging wells for drinking water, building hospitals, as we shall see in the coming chapters. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai represented some sort of an agent of social reconciliation that attracted large sections of the Sudanese population. Here the researcher finds that most of these activities were used to be carried by the state in the 1950s- up to early 1970s. Therefore the vacuum created by the retreat of the state is filled by the Sufi institution in Kordofan and in other parts of the country.

## Chapter Five

### *Shaikh Al Burai 's Poetry and Madih*

#### 5.1 Introduction: To What extent Sufi Poetry Plays role in Spreading Doctrine?

Poetry represents an efficient tool of the Sufis to express their personal experience. It also represents an efficient tool in spreading Sufi values and religious ethics. In the case of *Shaikh Al Burai*, poetry represented an efficient tool in moral transformation of the Sudanese society. It is significant to mention that poetry assumes the existence of an audience. Therefore *Shaikh Al-Burai* has two levels of followers:

a) the normal audience who listen to his poetry are larger and more inclusive and,

b) the disciples who follow his Sufi doctrine and ideation.

Because he has a large audience, *Shaikh Al-Burai* expresses very difficult Sufi meanings translated into very simple words. Referring to the early Sufi figures of the Islamic world shows *Shaikh Al Burai*'s wide knowledge of the general Sufi tradition.

Despite the enormous popularity that oral poetry has long enjoyed throughout the northern Sudan, few scholars have commented on the value of this poetry as a historical source.<sup>441</sup> It is significant to mention that oral Sufi Poetry (*Madih*) documents the history of the Sufi *Shaikhs*, documents incidents like *karama* (miracle doing), the social role of *Shaikhs* in society as well as documenting the Sufi chain to which the *Shaikh* belongs.

Poetry has two functions: a) transforming the world and b) interpretation of the world. As Brighton says; "the role of poetry is to be proceeding without end, to uncover areas of possibilities in any direction and to be-despite of every thing-a documentary and an analytical force. Ihssan Abbass went further to clarify that the role of the poet is to bring out from the field of mind the word until the word is being able to express the needs of the spirit and its validity, i.e. it becomes a revolution. The play of words becomes more important than its symantic connotation.<sup>442</sup> Here the role played by the *Madih* of *Shaikh Al Burai* is centered in the transformation of the society with revived Sufi values. This chapter answers the question that to what extent the poetry of *Shaikh Al Burai* played role in his transformation into a popular figure?

The Arabic religious *qasida* (poetry) was fully developed mainly from the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries on ward. The new poetic tread was clearly connected with the consolidation of organized Sufism and with the growing significance of public preaching which so well attested for Baghdad since the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>443</sup>

Being the inner dimension of the Islamic revelation, Sufism is related in both form and content to the Qur'an, and the Language of the Sacred Text, its rhythms and

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<sup>441</sup> Heather J. Sharkey, "Mahdist Oral Praise Poetry as a Historical Source: Qurashi Muhammad Hasan's *Qasa'id min Shu'ara Al-Mahdiyya*", *Sudanic Africa: A Journal of Historical Sources*, Vol.5, 1994, p.95.

<sup>442</sup> Ihssan Abbass, *Itijahat al Sh'r al 'Arabi al Mu'asir*, 'Alam al Ma'rifa, The National Council for Culture and Arts, Kuwait, 1978, p.8.

<sup>443</sup> Stephen Sperl and Christopher Shackle, '*Qasida Poetry in Islamic Africa and Asia*', Recent Books, in *Sudanic Africa*, vol. 7. 1996, p.172.



rhymes, its metaphors and symbols, has continued to echo in Sufi literature throughout the centuries.<sup>444</sup>

It is therefore not surprising that the earliest literary expressions of Sufism are in the form of aphorisms and short mystic utterances soon to be followed by poetry. The first example of these utterances are to be found in the poetry of 'Ali bin Abu Talib. His *Diwan*, a pivotal work, which is devoted to divine knowledge as well as piety, ethics, and even political instructions, was assembled in the fourth/tenth century by Sayed Shari Radii that contains the sayings of the man who was the representative *par excellence*, after the Prophet, of that reality which came to be known later as Sufism.

The wedding of the truth of the meaning (man's) of Sufism and poetic form, which also derives from the inspiration provided by the Qur'an, begins in the second/eighth century by a woman Sufi saint who lived in Basra as a disciple of Hasan al-Basri and was buried in Jerusalem, Rabi'a al-Adawiyya. Rabi'a lived the life of ascetic much like her mentor but the love of God (*al-Mahabbah*), which follows upon the wake of the fear of God (*al Makhafah*), gushed forth in their being, creating a poetry whose form suited perfectly the yearning and love of the Divine Beloved. Rabi'a distinguished carefully selfish love from Divine Love so the poem:

"I have loved Thee with two loves, a selfish love and a love that  
is worthy of Thee.  
As for the love which is selfish, therein I occupy myself with  
Thee, to be the exclusion of all others.  
But in the love which is worthy of Thee, Thou dost raise the veil  
that I may see Thee.  
Yet is the praise not mine in this or that,  
But the praise is to Thee on both that or this".<sup>445</sup>

Seyyed Hussein Nasr went to elucidate further that the greatest early master of Arabic Sufi poetry is, however, the Persian Mansur al-Hallaj whose *Kitab al Tawasin* and *Diwan* represent the first peak of early Sufi poetry in Arabic. One sees in Hallaj the manifestation of the dimension of illuminative knowledge or gnosis (*al-m'arifa*) in addition to love in poems of incredible power and directness, as for example when he says:

I saw my Lord with my heart's eye  
And I said to him "Who art Thou" and he said "Thou".<sup>446</sup>

Poetry happened to be the strongest manifestations of Sufism as early as the beginnings of Sufi development in Islamic history. Al Hallaj was no theorist like Junayd, he was suspected of dealings with the Carmatians, he had preached his faith to believers and infidels alike, and above all, sought to win converts by working "evidentiary miracles". On these grounds he was condemned. The controversial Sufi concepts of *hilul* and *itihad*, even among the Sufis themselves, played a great role in the development of

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<sup>444</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Sufi Essays*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1991, p.171.

<sup>445</sup> Ibid. pp.175-176.

<sup>446</sup> Ibid., p.176.

Sufism in Islamic history. Although, there is neither enough evidence indicating that Hallaj did say (*ana al Haqq*) nor that this saying directly contributed to his execution. Yet the charge against him is based on his Sufi intoxications. This is in spite of the fact that his execution was caused by his revolutionary political stance (supporting the zanj (blacks) and the Shi'a rather than his Sufi extravagant utterances.<sup>447</sup>

Al Hallaj prayed for union with his Beloved or tried to utter his feelings of perfect harmony with Him. He says:

“Betwixt me and Thee lingers on ‘It is I’ that torments me.  
Ah, of Thy grace, take away this ‘I’ from between us  
I am He whom I love and He whom I Love is I  
We are two spirits dwelling in one body, If thou seest me, thou seests Him  
And if thou seest Him, thou seest us both”.<sup>448</sup>

According to Hussein, poetry became the most intimate vessel for the expression of the truths of Sufism, of states and stations too subtle to be expressed in ordinary prose or the language of everyday life. It was not, however, until the seventh/thirteenth century that Arabic Sufi poetry reached its supermen perfection with ‘Umar ibn al-Farid and Muhyi al Din ibn ‘Arabi. During the centuries separating Hallaj from these great masters, it was not Arabic but Persian poetry that flowered to reach unprecedented realms of perfection of expression and subtlety of meaning.<sup>449</sup>

A prominent Sufi such as ‘Attar composed numerous *Mathnawis* as well as a *Diwan* and some prose works, but his masterpiece is the *Mantiq al-tayr*, already well-known in the West as *The Conference of the Birds*. This poem develops to new heights the theme of birds flying to return to their original abode, a theme already dealt with in a more philosophical vein by Ibn Sina’ and both Ghazzalis’, Abu Hamid and Ahmad. The Thirty birds (*si murgh*) flying through the dales and valleys of cosmic existence to reach finally the peak of the cosmic mountain Qaf wherein resides the Simugh, symbol of the Divine and their realization that in the union of that Divine Reality the *si murgh* or the Simugh, that the self is none other than the Self, constitute the theme of one of the greatest masterpiece of Sufi literature. When ‘Attar speaks of this union:

To be consumed by the light of the presence of the Simugh is to  
realize that,  
I Know not whether I am Thee or Thou are I;  
I have disappeared in Thee and duality hath perished.

Here, poetry serves not as an instrument and means of bringing about spiritual drunkenness but of sobriety which can comprehend the truth that is being expressed. This extensive poem, which is in reality an esoteric commentary upon the Quran, is an ocean

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<sup>447</sup> Amani Mohamed El Obeid, "Doctrine and Politics: The Sammaniyya Tariqa in Sudan", unpublished M.Sc. dissertation, 1997, Univeristy of Khartoum, p.25.

<sup>448</sup> Khalil Selmaan, "Islamic Mysticism in Modern Arabic Poetry and Drama", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 10, No.4, November 1979, p. 520.

<sup>449</sup> *bid.*

of gnosis in which the whole teaching of the Sufi tradition is to be found training from doctrine to practical advice.

Poetry has continued to serve as a vehicle for Sufism in societies of non-Arab origin. The tradition of Sufi poetry remains a living one throughout the Islamic world despite all the ravages of time and various forms of encroachment upon traditional modes of art and thought in the Islamic world in modern times.<sup>450</sup> Ibn al-‘Arabi declares that no religion is more sublime than a religion of love and longing for God. Love is the essence of all creeds: the true mystic welcomes it whatever guise it may assume:

“My heart has become capable of every form: it is a pasture for gazelles and convent for Christian monks,  
And a temple for idols, and the pilgrim’s Ka’aba and the tables of the Tora and the book of the Koran.  
I follow the religion of Love, whichever way his camels take. My religion and my faith is the true religion.  
We have a pattern in Bishr, the lover of Hind and her sister, and in Qays’ Lubna, and in Mayya of Ghaylan.”<sup>451</sup>

For Sufis poetry is always used as a vehicle and tool for moral and social reform. It is an important vehicle for the spread and transmission of the doctrine. Sufi poetry is centered on self-discipline and moral development. This point will be more clarified in the following sections.

## 5.2 Poetry and *Madih* in Sudan

In the realm of religious oral poetry in Sudan, the prominent form was panegyric poetry. This includes two main sub-forms: *al-Madiah an-nabawi* (religious poetry in praise of Prophet Muhammad) and *al-qasid* (religious oral poetry in praise of the saints). The question as to which of the two sub-forms of praise poetry came first into being is subject to controversy.<sup>452</sup> It is unfortunate that none of the early *Madiah nabawi* poetry seems to have survived in a documented manner. Yet Wad Daif Allah identified several early poets who composed poetry in praise of Prophet Muhammad. These include: Isma’il Sahib ar-Rababah (Isma’il with a rebec), the son of al-*Shaikh* Makki ad-Daqlash, who composed poems in praise of the Prophet and a commentary on his own poetry. Isma’ il says:

I had seen in my night, in my dreams,  
The best of mankind (Prophet Muhammad) joyfully laughing.

Other poets who Wad Daif Allah identified include: Ali *Walad* ash-Shafi’i, ‘Abd an-Nur ibn Abyad, and Madawi Bin Madani. All of them were notable religious leaders

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<sup>450</sup> Ibid., pp.182-185.

<sup>451</sup> Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, Islamic Book Service, Lahore, 1997, p.105.

<sup>452</sup> Ahmed Ibrahim Osman, “The Emergence of “*al-Madiah an-Nabawi*: Oral Religious Poetry in the Sudan”, available at [www.sacdo.com/web/categories/featured/articles/Ahmed-Osman/042004-Madidh-poetry.asp](http://www.sacdo.com/web/categories/featured/articles/Ahmed-Osman/042004-Madidh-poetry.asp), p.1

from the central parts of the Sudan. According to Wad Daif Allah, ibn Madani wrote poems and verses in praise of Prophet Muhammad that delighted men's souls.<sup>453</sup>

The earliest preserved and documented *Madih nabawi* poetry is a poem composed by an-Naqar ash-Sha'ir, a member of the Ja'aliyyin-Badrab community. He is considered to be the first known poet to compose *Madih al-qasam* (oath-praise poems), a form of *al-Madih an-nabawi* poetry where the name of God is mentioned at the beginning of the second hemistich (second half-line) of each individual line of the poem. This form of poetry is the first form of Sudanese complete religious poems composed in praise of the Prophet. After an-Naqar, the genre of religious oral poetry started to flourish; many poets appeared in the forefront of Sudanese literary endeavors. In his study of *Madih* poetry in the Sudan, Qurashi M. Hasan mentions poets like Qadurah, Ahmad Wad Tamim, Ahmad ad-Duquni, Muhammad Abu Kasawi, 'Abdulgadir Abu Kasawi, Haj al-'Aqib, Salih al-Amin, and Haj al-Mahi. These poets were active during the period of the Turkish rule in the Sudan.<sup>454</sup>

According to a Sudanese poet, it is at the beginning of the 19th century Sudanese melodies and tunes, arising from human endeavor during agriculture, hunting and herding matured, in different ways and patterns, the most important of which were the Sufi canticles, dirges, songs for weddings and festivals and the *doublet* arts which spread among cattle herders. The modern *Madih* developed in this environment. It is different from the choral Sufi canticles. A number of men excelled in *Madih*: Ahmed Wad Saad, Ahmed Wad Tamim, Ahmed Abu Shari'a and others. Their creativity established the art of individual *Madih*, chanted by one person, and different from choral group "*dhikr*" performed by many. This means the emergence of the individual performer in front of an audience, receiving and appreciating. A parallel development took place in the music and singing on social occasions. During the Mahdist state another dimension was added, when Omdurman in particular witnessed the mixture of tunes and melodies of Western Sudan with those of central Sudan, especially in *Madih*, Mahdist mobilisation changes and the *Jalalat* military march music of the Mahdist revolution soldiers. By the end of the 19th century, the main features of Sudanese national music were in place.<sup>455</sup>

The role played by *Madih* of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is similar to the role played by poetry during the Mahdist state. The difference is that during the Madist era poetry was used for political mobilization and in the case of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, *Madih* is used for moral mobilization of the whole society. According to Sharkey, the content of the Mahdist poetry could be educational and propagandistic; it could praise the leader while show casting his latest policies and directives. It had literary merit and entertained crowds with its sweet sounds and wise words. When harnessed for military purposes, it could boost army shown by proclamations which the Mahdi addressed to at least a few of them-including Muhammad wad al-Tuwaym, Ahmad wad Tamim and Ahmad wad Sa'ad-given them written permission to praise him. The Mahdi listened very carefully to their recitations and was known to suggest corrections to an ode, to improve its beauty, educational value, etc. It also said that the Mahdi thoroughly enjoyed listening to the poetry for the wisdom contained therein, since all the course of his Sufi training, he had

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<sup>453</sup> Ibid, p.2.

<sup>454</sup> Ibid.

<sup>455</sup> El Sirr A. Gadour, "Sudanese Singing 1908-1958", available at [www.dur.ac.uk/Justin.Willis/gadour.htm](http://www.dur.ac.uk/Justin.Willis/gadour.htm).

grown to appreciate poetry for educational and aesthetic purposes. The praise poet Muhammad ‘Umar al-Banna was one of the Mahdi’s favourites. According to Sharkey, the poets possessed a subtle power to sway the opinions of the Mahdi and the Khalifa.<sup>456</sup> Sharkey added that, the poetry during the Mahdist revolution played a significant role in mobilization. She stated that:

“Mahdist praise poetry must have played a critical role in the revolutionary phases of the movement, namely, from the time of Muhammad Ahmad’s declaration as Mahdi in 1881 until the fall of Khartoum in 1885. This link may be difficult or impossible to prove. Yet by postulating a role for oral poetry in the revolution, one can more readily understand how Muhammad Ahmad managed to mobilize enthusiastic support in far-flung corners of the northern Sudan while retaining ideological and political coherence within his movement”.<sup>457</sup>

The phenomenon of *Madih* used to be known in Sudanese culture since the Funj Sultanate as argued above. The same phenomenon appeared during the Mahdist era. The Mahdist praise poetry was an oral medium, composed by *munshids* who received a salary from the Mahdist state. It was intended to be sung aloud in glorification of the Mahdi and/or the Khalifa. Its wording usually reflected a mixture of classical Arabic and Sudanese colloquial Arabic, often with more of the latter than the former.<sup>458</sup>

The importance of the Sudanese Sufi *Madih* lies in the fact that it documents the life of the Sufi *Shaiks*, the *karama* and the Sufi chain (*silsila*). The *silsila* (lit.chain) consists of a list of names through which spiritual affiliation is traced and in some ways resembles a genealogy. It is quite separate, however, from the *Shaikh’s* personal genealogy although that also is regarded as endowed with power.<sup>459</sup> At the end of each Sufi *Madih*, the composer says his name. No one who says the *Madih* after the composer change the end or change his name. In that way, the whole *Madih* is kept in the common memory of the audience. It is interesting that most of the Sudanese *Madih* in general and the *Madih* of *Shaikh Al-Burai’* in particular is in colloquial Arabic language.

The wave of Sufi *Madih* or poetry came after the dominance of secularism in Sudan and other Muslim world. According to Frishkopf, authorship in Sufi poetry appears as surprisingly post-modern, despite its putatively traditional worldview where as authorship in contemporary Arabic secular poetry remains firmly modern. This ironic twist thus calls into question the chronological sequence tradition, modernism, post-modernism so often deployed in contemporary theory.<sup>460</sup> While Sufism does not provide the only forum to Islamic poetry, it is in Sufism that religion is most developed and most utilized in religious practice.<sup>461</sup>

<sup>456</sup> Heather J. Sharkey, “Mahdist Oral..”, op.cit., p.105.

<sup>457</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>459</sup> I.M Lewis, “Sufism in Somaliland: ..”, op.cit., p. 137

<sup>460</sup> Michael Frishkopf, “Authorship in Sufi Poetry”, *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetic (Literature and The Sacred)*, No. 23, 2003, p.79.

<sup>461</sup> Ibid., 80.

It is found that the *Madih* poetry in Sudan is very much influenced by the Sufi literature in the Islamic world. The above aforementioned *Madih* poets are considered the builders of the infrastructure of religious oral poetry in the Sudan. A close examination of their social rank reveals that they belonged to different Sufi Brotherhoods. Some of these poets were illiterate and some had but little knowledge of Islamic teaching; yet all of them received Islamic knowledge through the Sufi circles of their times. These Sufis brought numerous books from different parts of the Islamic World to the Sudan, particularly from Egypt, Hijaz and the Maghrib. All Sufi books available in the aforementioned regions found their way into the Sudan hundreds years ago. Their teaching was orally transmitted through their circles to aspirants and followers. In addition to *Dala'il Al-khayrat's* influence, the Sufis introduced many *mawalid* (sig. *maulid*; books on Prophet Muhammad's hagiography), into the Sudan. These are panegyric poetry or rhymed prose based on the legendary life of Prophet Muhammad. Until today, the Sudanese Muslims recite, highly appreciate and venerate them. One noted *maulid* is that written by Ja'far Bin Hasan al-Barzanji. The Qadiriyya and the Sammaniyya Brotherhoods recite it. In addition to the above-mentioned sources, many religious oral poetry also found their way into Sudan. Where Arabic language was promoted so was the case for religious oral poetry. The religious poetry of al-Busairi, the famous Egyptian poet, and 'Abdulrahim al-Bur'ai of Yemen also influenced religious poetry in the Sudan. Themes and imagery introduced by al-Busairi have had a far-reaching effect on Sudanese poets. The only differences that can be readily discerned between al-Busairi's themes and those of the Sudanese poets are the melody and rhythm, which accompany the Sudanese religious poetry.<sup>462</sup>

The Sudanese lean towards the use of drums and rhythm in their performances of religious poetry. These melodies and rhythms are mostly African in their nature. They are accompanied by dance. The themes the Sudanese poets incorporate in their poetry include history of the life of the Prophet before and after his prophecy and mentioning of his lofty qualities, and applying the same themes to their saints. The love of the Supreme Being, supplication, and litanies are the other themes highlighted in Sudanese religious poetry.<sup>463</sup>

Since many religious poets are illiterate, their poetry style is closer to colloquial than to literary style. It is characterized by the use of vernacular formulae and idioms. As described by Robert Kellog in his discussion of oral literature, these vernacular formulas and idioms "not only permit a speaker to form a sentence, they also make it possible for a listener to understand a sentence he had never heard before." The poet has to select his words according to the prosody of the poetic dictum of his audience. For this reason, religious oral poetry is characterized by formulaic language extracted from the *Qur'an* and from the everyday language of the community within which it mostly circulates. It is laden with recurrent themes and motifs derived directly from the basic concepts of Islamic oral literature in the Sudan.<sup>464</sup>

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<sup>462</sup> Ahmed Ibrahim Osman, op.cit., pp.2-3.

<sup>463</sup> Ibid.

<sup>464</sup> Ibid., p.5.

### 5.3 Sammaniyya *Tariqa* and Poetry (*Madih*) in Sudan

There are rare studies on the popular tradition of colloquial *Madih* in Sudan. One relatively unexplored area is popular religious poetry (*Madih*). Very little poetry has been preserved from before 1800; thereafter, the volume grows dramatically until the Mahdist Revolution of 1881-85. The study of this corpus, both its form and content, would reveal much about the interaction between the classical and colloquial forms of the language and on the main themes of popular spirituality. Another trend was the emergence of a tradition of writing within the new brotherhoods that lasted over several generations; three striking examples are the Sammaniyya, the Majdhubiyya and Isma'illiyya Sufi orders.<sup>465</sup>

According to Yusuf Badri, the Sammaniyya *tariqa* is the pioneer in the development of proper Arabic language in Sudan.<sup>466</sup> Before the introduction of the Sammaniyya in the Sudan, proper Arabic language was very weak, as is clear in *Tabaqat Wad Dhayf Allah*. The researcher thinks that the vast poetry literature of the Sammaniyya Sufi order needs to be thoroughly studied. This is because the Sammaniyya *Shaikhs* are characterized by vast authorship. Each Sammani *Shaikh* has minimum more than ten books and volumes on poetry. Abdel Mahmoud Nur Al Da'im who wrote eighty five books on Sufi doctrine and poetry is a good example. *Madih* of the Sammaniyya *Shaikhs* throughout the Sudan represents an unfolded area of research. This is because the Sammaniyya *tariqa* in Sudan represents a compromise between the scholar and popular Islam. There are the great poets of the Sammaniyya *tariqa* in the Sudan since late 19<sup>th</sup> century such as Ahmad Al-Tayyib Al Bashir (founder of the *tariqa*), Mohammed Sharief, Abdel Mahmoud Nur al Dai'm, *Shaikh* Al Quarashi wad Al Zain, *Shaikh* Al Tom wad Bannaqa, *Shaikh* Birair, *Shaikh* Qarib Allah and others. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai represents the most popular *Madih* composer in contemporary Sudan.

The pioneer of the Sammaniyya tradition in the Nilotic Sudan, Ahmad al-Tayyib who himself was a remarkable poet, wrote extensively on *tasawwuf* including a commentary on Ibn 'Atta Allah al-Iskandarî (d.1309), *al-Hikam*. Only one of Ahmad al-Tayyib's numerous sons appears to have been an author (Muhammad Sharief), although several of his pupils were. However, a grandson, Abd al-Mahmūd Nūr al-Dai'm (d. 1915), was a prolific author, of whose works a substantial number have been published. Abd al-Mahmūd succeeded his father upon the latter's death in 1286 A.H as head of the Tabat branch of the Sammaniyya. He joined the Mahdist cause in 1883, but later fell into disfavour with the Khalifa who had him imprisoned. After the Mahdiyya he returned to Tabat. He is said to have written histories of both the Mahdi and the Khalifa, but these have yet to be located.<sup>467</sup> It is significant that Hashim, one of the sons of Abdel Mahmoud influenced the poetry of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai. In an interview with Al Sahafa newspaper Al Bur'ai stated that: "*Shaikh* Hashim was my friend and I used to write the poems and send them to Hashim Abdel Mahmoud and when he writes his poems he sends them to me. Both writers used to read the poetry of each other. In other words it is a mutual

<sup>465</sup> "The Arabic Writing of Eastern Sudanic Africa: An overview", available at: <http://www.isita.org/dls/ALAI-Overvie>.

<sup>466</sup> For more information see Yusuf Badri, "A Survey of Islamic Learning in The Funj State", an unpublished B. Litt dissertation, Oxford University, 1970.

<sup>467</sup> "The Arabic Writing of Eastern Sudanic ..", op,cit, p.2.

influence”.<sup>468</sup> Besides the influence of *Shaikh* Abd al-Mahmoud, *Shaikh* Al Bur’ai was influenced by Abu Shari’a and Abu Sa’ad and specially *Shaikh* Hayati. *Shaikh* Al Bur’ai stated that:

مدح الخير طول حياتي  
بنهج الشيخ حياتي<sup>469</sup>

During all my life I praise the Prophet  
In the manner of *Shaikh* Hayati

Abdel Mahmoud Nur Al Da’im’s writings include *Azahur al-Riyad*, a major study of his grandfather and his pupils and a work comparable to Muhammad al-Nūr b. Dayf Allah’s *Kitab al-Tabaqat*, several accounts of his father and of Muhammad Abd al-Karim al-Samman and numerous commentaries. The literary tradition within the descendants of Ahmad al-Tayyib has flourished ever since at the various Sammaniyya centres in Omdurman, Tabat and elsewhere (Al Gazeera and Kordofan). The Qaribiyya branch in Omdurman, has been particularly effective in adapting the Sammaniyya tradition to a modern urban context. It is interesting that all the Sammani *Shaikhs* are known to be great poets. Abdel Mahmoud wrote about 85 books, four of which are in Sufi poetry such as *Shurb al Ka’as*, *Al ‘Urf al ‘Atir*, *al Rawdh al Bahig* and *Nafkh al Ruah fi Jinab Madh al Mustafa*. The researcher thinks that Abdel Mahmoud and his role in the development of the Sammani poetry and doctrine in Sudan needs a separate study.

Abdel Mahmoud Nur al Dai’m could be cited as a good example of a typical poet. He said explaining the hidden Sufi science (*al Ilm al Laduunni*). English translation will be given below but without rhyming ending.<sup>470</sup>

و ما كل علم يستفاد من الدرس  
و أعظم علم علمنا الكامل القدسي  
يفوزون أقوام به قد تقدسوا  
و مارجعوا يوما الى حالة النفس  
يطيرون بالشوق المتيم للعلا  
و يجنون أثمارا بواسطة الانس  
عرانس أسرار التجلى و أهله  
شموس وليس كالبدور و لا الشمس  
فأرواحهم في حضرة القدس دائما<sup>471</sup>  
و أجسامهم مع عالم الكون و الحس

Not all the sciences you make use of  
The greatest science is our complete and sacred science  
The people who win it are sacred  
and they never come back to their selves  
They fly high with love and wishes

<sup>468</sup> *Al Sahafa fi Hadhrat al Shaikh Al Bur’ai*, available at:  
<http://www.alsahafa.info/index.php?type=3&id=2147484364>

<sup>469</sup> Ibid.

<sup>470</sup> For all the following poems in Arabic, the English translation will be given but without rhyming ending.

<sup>471</sup> ‘Abd al-Mahmoud ‘Abd Al-Gabar al-Samman, “*Al shaikh Abdel Mahmoud Nur al-Da’im al ‘Alim wa al-Adib al Sufi*”, (*Shaikh ‘Abd al-Mahmoud Nur al-Da’im the Scholar and the Sufi poet*), 1993, Sudan Embassy, London, Property of O’Fahey, 536, Box 30, Centre of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, Bergen University, Norway.



And they harvest fruits with the mankind  
 Prides of sacred secrets suns and not like the sun  
 Their spirits are always under the sacred  
 And their bodies in the world

Another significant feature of the Sammani poetry is the love for the Prophet Muhammad. 'Abd al-Mahmoud said while he is leaving the Madina:

ودعته و مدامعى تسيل  
 و القلب من فرط الغرام عليل  
 و حشا الحشا نارا وداعى للذى  
 له كان جبرائيل وهو رسول  
 من حب قلبى فيه من أشواقه  
 كادت حياتى بالغرام تزول<sup>472</sup>

I said goodbye to him while my tears are pouring  
 and my heart is ill of love  
 The inside of me was filled with fire of goodbye  
 for whom Gibriel was for him while he is a Prophet  
 My heart was filled with his love to the extent of losing my life

A final Sammani figure and one of great significance within modern Sudanese literature is the poet, Muhammad Sa'id al-Abbasi (1880-1959), a son of Muhammad Sharif. Al-Abbasi represented an important stage in the development of modern Sudanese poetry; much influenced by developments in modern Egyptian poetry and active in the Graduates Congress in the 1930s and 1940s, nevertheless his poetry consciously reflects his Sammani Sufi initiation.

Sufi poetry or *Madih* before the appearance of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is centered on the following points: a) Parsing the Prophet, b) Glorifying the Sufi *Shaikh* c) Spreading Sufi values as means of social reform. Another outstanding theme in the (Sudanese) *Madih* (poetry) is the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina in the Arabian Peninsula. Mecca is the holy place for all Muslims where *al-Kara* is located, while Al-Medina is where the Prophet Muhammad died and is buried. The site of his tomb is where, virtually, all *al-Madiah an-Nabawi* poets long to visit. The Islamic verse of both the Sudan and West Africa are full of descriptions of these holy places and of the arduous journey to them. Traditionally, this part of the poem is called *al-château*, which literally means: walking or traveling. In this section the poet expresses his longing for the Prophet and the holy places before he sets off on the journey to visit them. He describes the journey from home, including the places he passes on his way to pilgrimage. He also illustrates the *haji* rites and his "visitation" to the Prophet. When a poem is directed towards a saint, his tomb and his village are the core of the poem.<sup>473</sup>

<sup>472</sup> Ibid.

<sup>473</sup> Ibid., p.9.

#### 5.4 *Shaikh Al Bur'ai and Madih*

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* started making *Madih* in 1940 when he was seventeen years old. Named after the great Muslim poet and saint whom is famous for his deep love of the prophet (PBUH) Abd Al-Rahim Al Bur'ai of Yemen. It is no surprise that the *Shaikh* grew up to follow in his footsteps to be a great poet and saint himself. *Al Shaikh* talks about his start in writing religious poetry (*Madih*) in one of his own poems where he described a dream of the Prophet (PBUH) in which the Prophet gave him a drink and asked him to 'start writing about the best of mankind', since ever *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* has wrote over one million poems in praise of the Prophet and many others containing advice to seekers, teaching good character (self-discipline), as well as many biographical poems about past saints of Sudan and the Arabic world.<sup>474</sup>

Abd Allah El-Tayyib stated that all poetry is musical, but he said that as regards the musical rhyming ends, Arabic poetry is original.<sup>475</sup> *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* in his *Madih* made excellent use in rhyming ends. This will be shown below. Moreover, Al Bur'ai used paraphrasing<sup>476</sup> in poetry of different Sufis such as Hashim Abdel Mahmoud. However, due to lack of classification and periodization of his poetry, it was difficult for the researcher to identify in which poems Al Bur'ai used paraphrasing with Hashim Abdel Mahmoud. The similarities and differences between the two poets need a separate study.

In making *Madih* *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* mentioned *Adab* and *Suluk* of the Sufi path. People thinks that *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* wrote more than one million poems, but not all the *Madih* is documented.<sup>477</sup> In an interview with *Shaikh Al Nour*, Al Bur'ai's son, the researcher got to know that *Madih* of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* that is reserved by him and which is found after his death is more than that known and circulated. He used to write and keep much of his *Madih*.<sup>478</sup> It is worth to mention that Al Bur'ai's father *Shaikh Waqi' Allah* was not famous for making *Madih* or poetry, as he did very few poems.<sup>479</sup> *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* used simple words in his poetry to teach the people basis of Islamic religion. This is very clear in the following verses:

كذلك قواعد الاسلام  
زكاة ثم حج سامي  
خمس جاءت في الاحكام  
توحيد صلاة و صيام<sup>480</sup>

The rules of Islam are five as came in Quran  
Unity of God, prayers, fasting, alms giving, and pilgrimage.

<sup>474</sup> Available at <http://www.geocities.com/albaneya/burai.html>

<sup>475</sup> Idris A. El Banna, "A Sudanese View of Comparative Poetry", Ahfad University for Women, 2002, p.17.

<sup>476</sup> Paraphrasing is somewhat an elaboration giving a restatement of the meaning in other form of words. See Idris A. Al Banna, op.cit., p. 172.

<sup>477</sup> Interview with *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, Al Zariba, 4 January 2000. It is significant to mention that not all the *Madih* of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is documented.

<sup>478</sup> Interview with *Shaikh Al Nour*, Khartoum, 28 June 2007.

<sup>479</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmad, *Burai' al Sudan*, op.cit , p. 20.

<sup>480</sup> Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai, *Hidayat al Majid fi al Figh wa al Tawhid*, Al Asbat Centre, Khartoum, 2004, p.7.

Al Bur'ai started his role as a social reformer in the area of Al Zariba by using the colloquial poetry to change the traditions that do not conform to Islamic religion, such as liquor.<sup>481</sup> In his *Madih*, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai concentrated on religious guiding, discouraging the youth from rural-urban and abroad immigration. He made use of the tones of the classical Sudanese songs known as *Aqhani Al Haqiba*.<sup>482</sup> For this reason his poetry became very popular and spread throughout the Sudan. He has two *diwans* or volumes on poetry. He has "*Fath zhi al Ma'arij fi al Shi'r al Sudani al Dariq*) also "*Riyad al Janna wa Nur al Dujuna*). Also he has a volume titled *Bahjat al Lailali wa Al Ayam fi madh Khair al Anam*.<sup>483</sup> He made *Madih* on all the Sammani *Shaikhs*, Sudanese and non-Sudanese such as Ahmed al Tayyib al Bashir, Hashim Abdel Mahmoud, Al Fatih Qarib Allah. As well, he made *Madih* on Mohamed Uthman al-Mirghani of the Khatmiyya *tariqa*, Ahmed Al Tijani, and on the Qadiriyya *Shaikhs* such as Yusif al 'Araki (Abu Shara), Arbab Al 'Aqaid, Hasan wad Husuna and others.<sup>484</sup> It is significant to mention that the tone of the *Madih* of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is borrowed from the local tones of Kordofan and Al Zariba.<sup>485</sup>

The researcher in studying the poetry of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is faced with the question that why the Sudanese middle class adopted Sufi values through the media of colloquial poetry? In order to answer this question, it is founded that relatively little research has been undertaken on colloquial Arabic in the region (Sudan). As a result it is difficult to make any reliable generalizations about dialect differences within the region. The general features of colloquial Arabic in the modern Sudan are reviewed in Hillelson (1935), xi-xxiv and Qasim (1409/1989), pp.247-387. Awn al-Sharif Qasim has produced a comprehensive dictionary (second edition, 1405/1985), while Stefan Reichmuth has published a detailed study of the Shukriyya dialect (1983).<sup>486</sup> The studies by Trimmingham, Holt and others of Sudanese Islam have tended to underscore the rural, popular Sufi, and in a sense almost anti-intellectual, character of the Sudanese religious class.<sup>487</sup> It is clear that the role played by *Madih* in Sudanese cultural heritage is evident. In a society which lacks means of communications and lacks literacy, the *Madih* played a major role in leading the Sudanese society in religious education, in documenting the historical events and in showing its cultural aspirations.<sup>488</sup>

The exact number of *Madih* of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is not known. The *Madih* of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is not compiled into one collection. However, there is a real efforts made by his sons, disciples and grandsons in Al Asbat Center to collect his famous *Madih*. According to *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai, most of the early *Madih* (in 1940,1950s and 1960s) was not documented and died with those who accompanied *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai and passed away. Therefore, there is no source for periodization.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid, p.64.

<sup>482</sup> Al Mahi Sulayman, the known Sudanese musician who was analyzing *Madih* of *Shaikh* Al Burai , Al Kawthar Radio, broadcasted on 27 June 2007.

<sup>483</sup> "Al Shaikh Abdel Rahim Mohamed Waqi Allah", available at: [www.gmrna.com/vb/showthread.php](http://www.gmrna.com/vb/showthread.php)

<sup>484</sup> Ibid.

<sup>485</sup> Mohamed Adam Tarnin, *Al Rai Al 'Aam*, 2005, No.2689, 21 February 2005, p.20.

<sup>486</sup> "The Arabic Writings of Eastern Sudanic Africa: An over view", available at <http://www.isita.or/dls/ALA1-overview,pp2-3>

<sup>487</sup> Ibid., p.3.

<sup>488</sup> Abu Bakr Al Qadi, "*Al Shaikh Al Bur'ai fi al Sudan: Tajadid Madrasat al Sulukiyya*", in Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed (ed.), *Bardrun Adha Al Dujuna*, op.cit., p. 46.

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* in his poetry followed the tradition adopted by most Sufi poets. A Sufi poet frequently intercalates his own lines with those of another, using a consistent interpolative formula e.g. *tarbi'*, *takhmis*, *tashtir* to elaborate and comment upon a more famous poem. The result is a collaborative poem- and authorship is shared. The *Burda* was often elaborated in this way.<sup>489</sup> In this way *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* and *Shaikh Hashim Abdel Mahmoud* have shared poems.

The poetry of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is widespread in all over the Sudan. It is broadcasted from the Radio and the Television, published in the press, books, recorded in recording cassettes and videotapes. It has been performed by youth and elders with the traditional music instruments such as "*Nuwba, tar, shatam and Rig*" and sanged with the modern music instruments such as "lute, violone and Gitar".

This phenomenon could be attributed, according to Al Boni and Said, to many reasons, such as: the *Shaikh* chose current words for his poetry that could be understood by youth. He dealt with the topics in modern context. He chose poetry words that enable the admission of light music (half tone and a quarter tone). He gives his poetry the music of known songs. Sometimes he chose the music of a song before he composes the poetry. He made a great use of the Sudanese songs.<sup>490</sup> Also *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* has the ability of using simple expressions that can easily disseminate Islamic Sufi values. This is in addition to using the tune of songs that has been known by *Shaikh Hashim Abdel Mahmoud*. This makes the influence of Tabat Sammani center is very evident.<sup>491</sup>

The youth who repeated the songs of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* poetry in Halfa, Port Sudan, Ginena, Juba made of him a popular figure. Poetry helped in spreading Arabic language, because people sing them even in the bi-lingual areas. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is a renewer in the field of Prophetic poetry.<sup>492</sup> His poetry or *Madih* is not sad as the case of *Awlad Haj Al Mahi*. *Madih* of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is moreover optimistic and calls for a virtuous society. In one of the poems, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* called his disciples to be optimistic and follow the Prophet's tradition even if he is sin doer. The follower will be happy in his live and after death. This is clear in the following poem:

صلى على النبي يوت	قم يا صبي ليل
لقريب أو أجنبي	قل غير تجنب
إن صلى على النبي	بشرى للمذنب
من وزرك تغسلك	بشراك يا من سلك
غير شيخ بتوصلك	بها يبقى توسلك
من سقر بتبعك	في الدنيا بتسعدك
لقاء ربك موعدك	في الجنة مقعدك
و تجيب الانفقد	بتعالج الفقد
و تسدد ألف قد <sup>493</sup>	بتحلل لك عقد

Oh boy pray in the night

<sup>489</sup> Michael Frishkopf, "Authorship, op.cit., p.81.

<sup>490</sup> Abdel Latif El Boni & Abdel Latif Saied, op.cit, p. 14.

<sup>491</sup> Majda Hassan, "Al Bur'ai: *Sha'iran*" in Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed (ed.), *Al Shaikh Al Bur'ai Badrun Adha Al Dujuna*, Al Asbat Centre, Khartoum, 2006, p.79.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid., pp.14-15.

<sup>493</sup> Shaikh Abdel Rahim Al B'urai, *Riyadh Al Janna wa Nur Al Dujunna*, House of Culture: First Festival, 1991, p. 268.

Always pray on the Prophet  
 Say without hesitating from a near person or a foreigner  
 What good omen for the sin doer if he prayed on the Prophet  
 Oh man who is initiated in Sufism, what a gospel your prayers will wash your sins  
 With praying on the Prophet, you will get salvation without the mediation of a *Shaikh*  
 You will be happy during live, you will not be ill  
 You will have your seat in Paradise when you meet God  
 Praying on the Prophet will cure the insane person and it brings back the thing you lost  
 Praying on the Prophet will solve your problems and close all doors of troubles.

This poem shows clearly the optimism of Al Bur'ai in his poetry. It also shows the neo-Sufi impact in his doctrine. This is clear when he says that praying on the Prophet will make any sin doer reach salvation. According to *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai there is no need for a Sufi *Shaikh* if the disciple prayed always on the Prophet. Here it is clear that achieving salvation is through the mediation of the Prophet only. Praying on the Prophet will cure the illness, solve the problems and close doors of troubles.

*Shaikh* Al Bur'ai celebrated poem that has been translated into English is "*Bawrika Tibak*" and is considered as good way of preaching Islamic values that overcame Islamic boundaries to other religions. It has been presented by different musical Groups such as Al Sahwa group, Al Safwa group and Al Asala. This is in addition to the classical group of "*Awlad Al Bur'ai*" or sons of Al Bur'ai. It is significant to mention that his poetry attracted high state officials, including those of the *Ingazh* regime who were very close to *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai. This is very clear in his *Madih* of *Al Taira Sudaniyya* or Sudanese Airplane. A former Minister of Interior is one of his disciples. Al Bur'ai said:

لى رسولنا قوماك بى	بالتايرة السودانية
بقصة العملية	عباس سمير قوموا لى
من بدرى أحجز لى	يابن الخضر لك لى
قول الحمالة على <sup>494</sup>	الشيخ عثمان والى

With Sudan Airways let us go to the Prophet  
 Abbas<sup>495</sup> and Samir go for me with the story of the surgery  
 The son of Al Khidir, make booking early  
*Shaikh* Osman my master say it will be your responsibility

The *Madih* and poetry of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai represent his doctrine that reflects popular Islam strong spiritual-social network. This popular Islam is dominated by the concept of *madad* (spiritual help) and *baraka* (blessing). According to Frishkopt, Sufis position themselves within a vast, well-connected spiritual-social network, tightly bound by love and connecting active agents both living and dead. Central to the Sufi's reality is the '*alam al-arwah* (world of the spirits) within which one may establish personal

<sup>494</sup> *Shaikh* Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai, *Misr Al Mu'amana*, *Rawai' Al Bur'ai: Al Majmu'a al Awla*, Al Asbat Centre, 2001, p.14.

<sup>495</sup> He is the former Minister of Interior Abbas Medani, *Ibid*, p.14.

affective relationship with other spirits irrespective of distance in time and space. Belief in this world consequently enables a dramatic expansion of the Sufi's spiritual-social network. Closest to God, the Prophet Muhammad, *Mala'ika* (angels) and *awliya* (saints) extend spiritual help (*madad*) and blessing (*baraka*) to the *muhibin* who love them. Foremost among saints is the Prophet Muhammad's immediate family (*Ahla-al-Bayt*) followed by founders of the major orders (the *Aqtab*).

## 5.5 Main Themes of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai's* Poetry

The poetry of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* was used to disseminate his doctrine. It is divided into five main sections:

1) The Sufi doctrine that includes doctrine of the Sammaniyya order in addition to glorifying the five pillars of Islam such as praying (*salat*), fasting (*Siyam*), Alms giving (*Zaka*), and pilgrimage (*el-Hajj*) and glorifying of the Prophet.

2) Newly advent type of praising the Prophet (*Madih*) and praising Sufi *Shaikhs* using the tones of classical Sudanese songs. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* glorified the Prophet by reproducing the *Sirra Al Nabawiyya* (Prophetic tradition) and by Sudanization of this Prophetic tradition. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* insisted that his audience are to gain salvation through mediation of the Prophet.

3) Social issues which includes: a) moral reform, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* glorified the importance of taking care of parents, family relations and intimate relations with humanity at large b) anti-harmful traditions, c) women,<sup>496</sup>

4) Social reform which includes different charity works.

5) *Karama*: affirmation of *karama* and miracles doing in the Sudanese Sufism. Here *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is considered as really reviving Sudanese popular Sufism. Here he rejected all the sayings of the Wahabis who are trying to have in roads to Sudanese with the help of donations coming from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries.

### 5.5.1 The Sufi Doctrine and Glorification of the Prophet

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* have different poems that reflect the Sufi doctrine in general and the Sammaniyya doctrine in particular. A core theme in *Madih* of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is glorification of the Prophet. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* like Sufi *Shaikhs* of eastern Africa in early

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<sup>496</sup> It is significant to mention that there is a recent international interest in the Poetry of *Shaikh Al Burari'* and Sudanese *Madih*. The French-based label 'Institute du Monde Arabe' took the long overdue step of introducing the world to the most treasured and revered musical and religious art forms of the Sudan. To the Sudanese, *Awlad al Bura'i* and *Awlad Al-Hajj Mahi* are no strange names- their soulful crooning has long been an integral part of their lifestyle, being a calming and serenity-nurturing escapism from the daily routine and a refreshing approach to reaffirming faith. Never has the marriage of culture and faith been so rich, sounded so touching, and stirred feelings of awe at the power of these vocal stylings and the striking nature of their lyrical context. Available at [www.djpeanuts.co.uk/recording/P818OG.html](http://www.djpeanuts.co.uk/recording/P818OG.html)

20<sup>th</sup> century is characterized by spiritual defense of Prophetic and saintly mediation between believer and God as a necessary step along the path of salvation. In the end the poetry/*Madih* represents a scathing refutation of Wahabi doctrine.<sup>497</sup>

Poetry in the case of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* proved to be an effective means to disseminate and preaching Sufi doctrine. In other parts in Africa-mainly eastern Africa, poetry proved to be an efficient tool of spreading Sufi teachings among the illiterate disciples. A researcher wrote an article examining the teachings of the Qadiriyya order through the medium of popular devotional poetry that served as one of principal means of disseminating their message to this wide spread diverse and largely non-literate constituency.<sup>498</sup> Glorification of the Prophet and the Holy Quran is a good example. This is very clear in the following:

ابلى المشرفات و سمن فاخر  
ينفعنى درهن فى اليوم الاخر  
ابلنا يا معشر  
مية و أربععاشر<sup>499</sup>

My graceful she-camels  
Earmarked, honored and rife  
Do offer me their best of milk  
In the time of Hour.

One of the important concepts in *Madih* of *Shaikh Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai* is the concept of *baraka* (blessing) and *madad* (spiritual strength) taken from the Prophet Muhammad. Also the mediation of the Prophet directly. He says:

كنزى ونورى كريم هون	بيهو تقضى أمورى رسول الله
مولاي بحق لم يكن و الطور	جميع ما كان فى الكتاب مسطور
هون لى عشاي بل غداى و فطور	من التقوى كسوتى و عطورى
أجب لدعاى زيل بلاى و شرورى	و حفظك لى فى القعاد و مرورى
أملا قلبى بيك غنى و حجورى	وزيل يا بارى الانام فجورى <sup>500</sup>

My treasure and my light (the Prophet),  
God makes things easy for me, with the Prophet things are fulfilled.  
My Lord I ask you with the authority of *lam Yakun* and Al Tour,  
and with all what is written in the Holy Book  
Oh God make easy my dinner, Lunch and breakfast.  
Piety is my dressing and my perfumes  
Oh God answer my demand, take away my sins  
and keep me save while staying or passing  
Oh God fill my heart with your richness  
and take away my sins Oh God who cures people

<sup>497</sup> Scott. S. Reese, "The Best of Guides: Sufi Poetry and Alternate Discourse of Reform in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Somalia", *Journal of African Cultural Studies* (Islamic Religious Poetry in Africa), Vol.14, No.1, June 2001, p.59.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid, p. 49.

<sup>499</sup> Muhamad Taha Muhammad Ahmed, "*Tasamuh al Tasawuf Yahzim Dua'at al Fitan*" in Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, (ed.), op.cit., p.106.

<sup>500</sup> *Shaikh Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai, Misr Al Mu'amana*, Al Asbat Centre, Khartoum, 2001, p.19.

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* in glorifying the Prophet as the one who give support during crisis.

طه صاحب القرب      طه كاشف الكرب  
Taha (one of the names of the Prophet) the one near,  
Taha who unviel crisis

This poetry has the weight of litany and many of the doctrine offices. If the disciple recites it he will have his wishes fulfilled, sins erased and enjoy slavation. An important dimension of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai's Madih* is the elimination of class stratification in celebration of his *Madih* which is very important in the process of the transformation of *Shaikh Al-Burai'* into a charismatic leader and national figure. This trend is very clear in the following poem in which he welcomes all kinds of people. He says:

بحرى يملأ قيو فى  
بالكرم لضيو فى  
بوت أكون مضيو فى  
أقبل المعيو فى و أحمه بسيو فى<sup>501</sup>

My sea is filling my boards  
with generosity to my guests  
I wish I always have guests,  
I accept the caste person and protect him with my swords

In the above poem, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* stated that he supports the marginalized which happened to be the newly marginalized educated Sudanese.

One of the most important *Madih* of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is his *Madih* on *Msr al Mu'amana bi Ahl Allah* or "The guarded Egypt by the holymen". The story of this *Madih* is that in a trip to Egypt to have an operation, the night before the operation he called the saints of Egypt for help, and in the morning to the surprise of the physicians, and everyone else including *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, it is founded that he was cured '*min ger ebra wa majraha*' (with no needle nor an operation). Hence, *Shaikh Al Burai* wrote one of his most famous poems called *Misr al muamana* in honour of the Egyptian saints. The poem brought to Al-Bur'ai much honour from the authorities of Egypt, as well as large appraisal by Egyptians and Sudanese alike.<sup>502</sup> This *Madih* shows how *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* was deeply rooted in Sufi sciences. Most disciples of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* believe that this *Madih* has blessing or *baraka*. It is believed that any one who heard this *Madih* will be blessed. Most of the words he mentioned and the numbers he recalled reflect deep knowledge of Sufi sciences. This is seen in the following:

ندعوك بالاربعة و الكتب الاربعة

<sup>501</sup> *Shaikh Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai*, "Laik Salam Mini", Al Asbat Centre , Khartoum, 2003, p.15.

<sup>502</sup> available at: <http://www.geocities.com/albaneya/burai.html>



و السور المية و العشرة و أربعة  
 بالملائكة الستة و الكرما الاربعة  
 بنينا محمد و الخلفا الاربعة  
 و الستة البعدهم و الائمة الاربعة  
 و الفقها السبعة و أقطابنا الاربعة  
 أوتاد الارض فى القبل الاربعة  
 الابدال و النقبا العشرة فى أربعة  
 أحفظ جوارحى الثلاثة و أربعة  
 و تجافى المضجع جنوبنا الاربعة  
 زيل مرض الجسم فى طباعو الاربعة  
 بارك أسبوعنا ليوم الاربعة  
 وأيام السنة تسعين فى أربعة  
 وبحورنا السبعة وأنهارنا الاربعة  
 نسلم من أربعة و نحشر مع أربعة<sup>503</sup>

O God we beg you in the Four and the four books<sup>504</sup>  
 And the one hundred, the ten and four Quranic verses  
 By the six angles and the four honoured  
 I ask by with Prophet Muhammad and his four successors  
 I call you by the six following and the four Imams<sup>505</sup>  
 And by the seven jurisprudents and the four poles<sup>506</sup>  
 And by the pillars of earth in the four directions  
 And the substitutes and *Nuqaba* who are ten multiplied by four.  
 Keep my inside the three and four  
 And our four sides be kept away from sleeping  
 Keep away the body illness in its four natures  
 Bless our week until Wednesday  
 Bless the days of the year ninety multiplied by four  
 Bless our seven seas and four rivers  
 Save us from four and we be in the last day with four.

This poem represents a litany that brought safety and success throughout the days of the year. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai recalled the four books, all Quranic verses, angels, Prophet Muhammad and his four successors in order to keep him safe and everyone who reads the poem. This poem brings safety and success in worldly affairs.

It is clear that poetry of Al Bur'ai equates litanies. In other words, poetry represents a means of performing Sufi rituals. This twining of poetry and litanies of Al Bur'ai suited the educated middle class. As every one could upgrade himself in the Sufi path by listening to his poetry. Moreover, the individual can achieve his needs by doing litanies only, without the intercession of any Sufi *Shaikh*. It is an individualist way of self-purification that attracts the educated middle class.

<sup>503</sup> *Al Shaikh* Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai, *Misr Al Mua'mana*, Al Asbat Center, Khartoum, 2001, p. 8.

<sup>504</sup> The four books are the Quran, the Bible, the Torah and *Zabour*.

<sup>505</sup> The four Imams are Malik, Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Abi Hanifa and Al Shafi'i. The six followers are:

<sup>506</sup> The seven jurisprudents are: Saied ibn al Musayab, Salman ibn Yasar, El Qasim ibn Muhamd, Abu Bakr ibn Abdel Rahman, 'Ubaid Allah ibn Abdel Allah and Kharija ibn Yazid.. The four poles are: Abdel Qadir Al Gilani, *Shaikh* Ahmed Al Badawi, Shaikh Ahmed El Rifaai and Ibrahim Al Dusuqi, Al zamzami, op.cit.

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* used classical as well as modern poetry. It is clear that his colloquial poetry attracted a huge number of audience. He use the daily used words to express Sufi values, such as:

صلوات دوام عد ما لفت لساتك  
برعى اليكون فى حماك من كل فاتك  
لاين العواتك  
حول بينه وبين للحرمة هاتك<sup>507</sup>

For the beloved I always pray as the wheels turns round  
Burai' be under your protect from all sorts of killers  
Be between him and the one who abuses the taboo.

### 5.5.2 Sufi Initiation and making Litanies

There are many examples of Al Bur'ai's poetry calling for the following Sufi path. This is clear in the following poems:

ألا يا سالكا طرق السلامة  
وأذكر هادم اللذات و اعلم  
و ذكر الله لا تنساه تلقى  
وتدخل جنة فيها متاع  
و تنظر فى حضيرتها اله  
تورع و إجتنب فعل الملامة  
بأن الموت مفتاح القيامة  
به الاكرام فى دار الكرامة  
ولا خوف عليك و لا ندامة<sup>508</sup>  
و تشرب صافيا كأس المدامة

Oh man who is initiated to the safe road  
Keep away from sin doing  
Remember death and remember that death is the door to the Last Day  
Do not forget remembering God, by whom you will be honoured  
You will enter paradise where you will be happy and you will not regret  
You will see God and you will drink the cup of pure wine

Here Al Bur'ai encouraged people to be initiated into Sufism. Refraining from sin doing is the first step for salvation. The key factor in Sufi promotion is remembering God through keeping litanies. In another poem preaching Sufi initiation, Al Bur'ai's celebrated Sufi initiation and keeping litanies. He said:

طريق القوم سلاما  
ياخوانا بيه أبشروا  
يا راغب السلاما  
لا تكون عليك ظلاما  
إستقبل و هيم هياما  
والى الصوم و القياما  
لا تنهر اليتامى لو  
تقوى و صدق الكلاما  
أسلك سبل السلاما  
لا جنحة ولا ملامة  
أسهر و الناس نياما  
بتفوز يوم القياما<sup>509</sup>  
من برنو و تاما

The Sufi *tariq* is peace, pietism and telling the truthfulness  
Oh my brothers *tariq* is good omen  
Oh who seeks safty, go in the roads of peace  
You will not find darkness, nor sins and you will not be blamed

<sup>507</sup> Ibrahim Al Qurashi, "wa Faqadat al Uma al Rajul Al Uma" in Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed (ed.), Al Bur'ai Badrun, op.cit., p. 37.

<sup>508</sup> Shaikh Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai, *Riyadh Al Janna*., op.cit., p. 92.

<sup>509</sup> Shaikh Al Bur'ai, *Riyadh Al Janna*., op.cit., p.300.

Initiate yourself in Sufism and contemplate, be awake while others sleep  
Continue fasting and praying during nights, you will get salvation in the Last Day  
Do not shout upon an orphan even if he is from Barno and Tama

Here Al Bur'ai encouraged people to be initiated into Sufism and continue performing litanies. This is for living happily and achieving salvation in the Last Day.

Another example for the importance of following the Sufi path:

طريق القوم ما أحلاه	لى من ذكر مولاه
و شقاوة الخلاه	كل يوم يزيد بلاه
هذا طريق الجنة	أتى بالكتاب و السنة
صدقنا به و أمنا	به طينا و طاب زمنا
هذا طريق الرقابة	فى الله صاحبو غابا
أسيادوا لهم نقابة	خشوبو بطن الغابة
أمسك أساسه الخمسة	و آداب شروطو الخمسة
إتنفل و صلى الخمسة	و سد الواحد بالخمسة <sup>510</sup>

The Sufi path is so sweet for the one who remembers God  
It is a misery for the one who leaves it, will be every day in trouble  
This is the path of Paradise, its mentioned in Holy book and the Prophetic tradition  
We believed in it, with it we are happy and our days are happy  
This is the path of accountability, in God one is contemplating  
The Sufi path masters have a trade union, with it they entered the forest  
Keep the five litanies and the five conditions of the Sufi path<sup>511</sup>  
Make your litanies and the five prayers, you will equate five men

Here *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai insists on keeping litanies as means for the promotion in the Sufi path. Al Bur'ai thinks that performing these litanies are time-saving (only five litanies) and highly rewarding both in worldly affairs and for achieving salvation. It is a means for promotion in life.

### 5.5.3 Poetry for Glorifying Islamic Pillars

*Shaikh* Al Bur'ai glorified the five pillars of Islam such as praying, alms giving and pilgrimage. In glorifying praying, he said:

اتوضا صلى من ذنبك استغفر      لنبيك صلى أكثر من التهليل

Make ablution, pray,  
say I beg forgiveness of God, pray on the Prophet,  
Repeat more and more the oneness of God

This popular poetry reflects the importance of self-discipline in the mission of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai. Saying I pay forgiveness of God which is linked to repentance is the most important step towards purifying the heart of Sufi. Also he says:

<sup>510</sup> Ibid.

<sup>511</sup> These litanies were clarified in the last chapter.

حج و صلى و ذكى مالك بلا أهمال<sup>512</sup>

Make pilgrimage, pray and make the alms giving without delay

In glorifying fasting as an important ritual, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* said:

صائم رمضان مولاك غفور      لدعاك أجاب ذنبك مغفور<sup>513</sup>

You who is fasting Ramadan, your God is forgiving,  
God Accept your wishes and your sins are forgiven

In glorifying pilgrimage, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* says:

الشوق على الخضرا الشارف بناها      والكعبة و المروة عرفة و منهاها<sup>514</sup>

I miss the green tomb with huge building  
And the Ka'aba and Marwa and 'Arafa and Muna.

Here *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* insisted on the importance of pillars of Islam. His simplification of Islam attracted many non-Muslims to convert to Islam. They were either of Sudanese African tribes or Europeans. However, the number of Europeans who joined *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is much fewer than those who joined the *Burhaniyya Tariqa*.

#### 5.5.4 Social Issues

##### 5.5.4.1 Moral Reform and self-discipline

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* concentrated on self-discipline in order to achieve moral reform of the whole society. It is interesting that *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* used the individualist doctrine of the *Sammaniyya* order to reach collective mobilization of society. As argued before *Al Bur'ai* he started anti-liquor mobilization that led most of the inhabitants of *Al Zariba* to give up drinking alcohol.<sup>515</sup>

Starting by self-discipline, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* managed to revive moral reform of the individual as a prelude to uplift the whole society. He has a famous poem which might be considered a summary of the ethical message represents the teachings of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. This poem helped in making moral transformation of the society. It begins as follows:

بورك طيبك أحسن في من عاداك أو من يحبك  
أذكر إلهك يوت

<sup>512</sup> Al Zamzami Bashir, "Al *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* wa *Dawrahu fi Tabsit al Da'awa li 'ama al Sh'ab Al Sudani*" or (The role of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* in simplifying the missionary to all Sudanese people), available at: [http://www.mubarak-inst.org/stud\\_reas/research\\_view.php?id=91](http://www.mubarak-inst.org/stud_reas/research_view.php?id=91), p.1

<sup>513</sup> Ibid.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid, p.2

<sup>515</sup> For more information see: Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Bur'ai al Sudan*..., first edition, op.cit, pp.48-50.

To be healthy well secured, be good to your enemies  
Those been true and good, always remember Lord<sup>516</sup>

This poem shows the importance of forgiveness towards the enemies as well as friends. Forgiveness is the core of all religions, it is very clear in Christianity as well as in Islam. Forgiveness leads to the cohesion as it reduces conflicts in societies.

لا تنسى ربك أكثر لي ذكر الموت تلقاهو طبك  
بل أنسى إحسانك في من يحبك  
وتناسى يوت لإساءة من يسبك

Remember your own one God,  
Don't also forget death,  
The big gain to your good health  
Forget to highest hands  
Loving been to your friend  
Ignore what offence upon you when incurred

This poem shows the importance of remembering God all the time. This is as a step establishing life after death. Al Bur'ai ask the audience to forget the highest hands and forget the offences when happened.

فيما يهملك أجعل جميع فكري شغلك وهمك  
ثم احترم شيخك والدك وأمك والحاكم العادل خالك وعمك

Top most and important you ought  
To see your work  
Concerns fully your thought  
Respect well your master, and also parents  
And but the fair ruler, both ways of uncles.

This poem shows that it is important for people to see their own affairs and not with others' affairs. Here *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai calls the audience to be successful in their lives. Al Bur'ai asked the audience to respect the Sufi *Shaikh*, the parents, the just ruler and both ways uncles. It is clear that Al Bur'ai calls for moral society. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is among the few Sudanese Sufi poets to talk about the just ruler. Though he did not define the criteria of this just ruler.

This respect of the parents and family kins is further emphasized in the following poem. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai concentrated on importance of taking care of parents. Under the

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<sup>516</sup> The English translation is quoted from Idris A El Banna, *A Sudanese View of Comparative Poetry*, Ahfad University for Women, 2002, pp. 163-165.

wave of economic liberalization and globalization, family relations became a debatable issue in all religions.

أحلب له درك والدك      وهب الام ذهبك و درك

Give you parents all what you have  
And give your mother your gold and jewellerys

لا تفشى سرك لكافة المخلوق لو يبقى سرك  
أخشى الذي يعلم جهرك وسرك  
كالأولية السادة الحالم يسرك

To yourself you keep your heart  
Don't show to best of kins  
Anything or anyone part  
Fear only who knows thee well, in and out apart  
Same as the holy figures  
You know them all smart

Here Al Bur'ai advise the audience not to uncover secrets to others even if they are relatives. He asks them to feel afraid of God only and it is a call for being closer to God.

جود ان دعنك بى مالك الايام أو ودعنك

Donate your share of wealth  
When changes are at best,  
Or when become your worst

Al Bur'ai advise the audience to give part of their wealth to the have-not. It is a call for social relations and societal cohesion. In Sudan people were able to overcome poverty by the strength of social relations.

ان رمت من خلاقك يرضى عنك  
لاحبتك و أعداك كن بيضا سنك

Willt thou the Lord you see  
Be pleased to love thee  
To friends or enemies both,  
Smile to the whitish tooth

Al Bur'ai again advise the people to forgive and be good with those whom they love and and for their enemies.

بحرك وبرك زاور جميع القوم كالتوم وبرك  
قبل قدم أمك وبه تبرك  
بر والديك لكي إبنك يبرك

On sea, river or land  
Visit every *Shaikh* at home  
Same as Bireir and Tom  
On knees, blessed off boot  
Kiss your mother's bear foot  
Obey loving parents,  
To be so righteous your sons

Al Bur'ai encourages the audience to have strong relations with all Sufis such as El Tom wad Bannaqa and *Shaikh* Birair in Shabasha. Again he mentioned the importance of taking care of parents. The importance of family relations is common among all religions specially under the wave of globalization.

أحلب له درك والدك وهب للأم ذهبك ودرك  
خالف هوى نفسك حسدك وضرك  
وأحذر عقوق والديك في الحين يضرك

Milk your own stock  
Milk same to your father  
To mother give the gold and gems  
Don't yield to be covetous  
Nor be led, to harmful lust  
Be ware to, hurt parents  
Lest you too be hurt at once

Here Al Bur'ai asks the audience again to take care of their parents to the best possible as being bad to their parents will harm them immediately. He advises them to fight covetous and being harmful to others.

الزم محلك وتحلى بالأداب حرمك وحلك  
وأصبر لأمر الله حين يمتحنك  
من ربة الأسواء والشر يحلك

Stick well to morals  
Keep firm to where you stand  
At dominant presence  
When examined by Lord  
You resort to patience  
From grips of such evils

Lord then clears your ills

Al Bur'ai asks the audience to stick to morals and to keep firm where they stand. Also he ask them to be patient when have evils. It is clear here the call of Al Bur'ai for establishing a just and moral society.

صلوات تظلك يالهادي في أم شباك تسليم يصلك  
البرعي بن الشيخ بالخير يقولك  
أضمنى والأحباب ونكون في ظلك<sup>517</sup>

Prayers cover you well  
O Hadi at your tomb  
Goes peace to where you dwell  
Al Bur'ai, son of Shaikh and thou art fair,  
Will ask yourself  
To be kept within your care  
With all my kins close as well<sup>518</sup>

Al Bur'ai here like other Sufis ended the poem with praying on the Prophet and asked the Prophet to put him, his family and those who love within his care.

This poem summarizes the core doctrine of religion in general and Sufism in poarticular. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai insisted on the value of forgiveness for all human kind. Also he insisted on the issue of family and taking care of parents. Even in other religions family relations in the wave of globalization become an annoying matter. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai, unlike other Sufi poets, is the only one who talked about respecting the just ruler. It is very clear that this poem concentrates on sefl-discipline and self-socialization. "Be against your self-envy and your evil". *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai started with individual socialization and individual self-discipline to address issues of social reform of the whole society at large.

Another poetry in which *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai dissiminated Sufi ethics and which preaches moral transformation of the society is as follows:

و زل بها كل عيب كامن فيكا	طهر جناتك بالاذكار مع فيكا
وهو الذى بكوؤس الحب يسفيكا	الذكر خير أنيس تستريح به
ومن جهاد و عتق عنه ناهيكا	الذكر خير من الانفاق من ذهب
و أترك مجالس قوم عنه تلهيكا	الذكر روضة خلد فارتعن بها
عليك بالكنز بعد الفقر يغنيك	ان القناعة كنز لا فناء له
و اراع المودة فى خل يواليكا	لا تغضبى و لا تجهل على أحد
نميمة أفسدت اصلاح أهليكا	ولا تشاحن و لا تغتب أخاك و دع
سل الاله الذى أعطاه يعطيك	و لا تكن حاسدا شخصا على نعم
فوق الثلاثة صالح من يعاديك	و لا تصاعر و لا تهجر اخا ابدا
اليك أفضى بأسرار ينجيك	اصحب خيارا و جالس بالامانة من

<sup>517</sup> *Shaikh* Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai, *Misr al Mu'amana*, (Madih Collection), Al Asbat Centre, Khartoum, 2001, p.22.

<sup>518</sup> All English translation is quoted from Idris A. El Banna, op.cit., pp.163-165.



كن ناصحا و أمينا غير ذى ريب      من غشنا ليس منا قول هادিকা  
وعامل الناس بالاحسان محتسبا      عسى بذلك رب العرش يجزيكا<sup>519</sup>

Oh God Oh God Oh God Oh God

Purify your inside and your mouth with reciting *dhikr* and take away of your inside every bad habit

*Dhikr* is the best friend with whom you rest and with whom you drink cups of love  
*Dhikr* is better than giving gold to people and better than holy war and better than de-enslavement.

*Dhikr* is eternal paradise make joy in it and keep yourself away from circles that take you away of it.

To be pleased with what you have is unended treasure stick to this treasure after being poor you will be rich.

Do not be angry with any one and be nice with a friend who likes you

Do not quarrel and leave gossiping in the absence of your friend. Leave gossiping that destroy your people.

Do not envy any one for what he has. Ask God who gave him to give you as well

Do not be angry with any one more than three days. Be good with your enemy

Be friend to good people, and be honest to one who tells you his secrets.

Be honest and advising. Any one who cheats, the Prophet said does not belong to us

Be good to people, and ask God. For He may give you good reward.

Here *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai concentrated on ethics building and injecting new values different from the moral values represented by cheating, lying and hoarding money dominated under the era of capital accumulation and social disruption. This is clear in the following verse:

كن ناصحا و أمينا غير ذى ريب      من غشنا ليس منا قول هادিকা

Be honest and advising. Any one who cheats us the Prophet said does not belong to us.

Al Bur'ai concentrated on self-purification as starting point for upgrading the whole society. He does not address his disciples only but he addressed all his audience regardless whether they are Sufis or not. In describing his ability to attract sin doers, Al Bur'ai says:

ديمة أقيم الليل لى الحمار  
بى صفا و تصدى لا أمارى  
يهدى وعطى اللاعب القمار  
و السكارى و ناس ود عمارى<sup>520</sup>

I always pray the whole night until sunrise

<sup>519</sup> For full text of the poem see: *Shaikh* Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai, *Misr Al Muamana*, Al Asbat Centre, Khartoum, 2001, pp.23-25.

<sup>520</sup> Ibrahim Al Qurashi, "wa Faqadat al Uma al Rajul Al Uma" in Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed (ed.), Al Bur'ai Badrun, op.cit., p.37.

In peace of mind I do not care  
My preaching cures the gambler, the drunker and the one who uses snuff

This section showed the moral mission of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. This moral mission is meant to uplifting of society. It attracts the educated middle class in particular because this moral uplifting could be achieved individually. The individual is able of purifying and upgrading himself only by following the litanies and listening to poetry of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. Poetry is a means of self-purification.

#### 5.5.4.2 Women

The moderation of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai's* poetry is reflected in his dealing with women. Contrary to the Wahabis' who are known for restricting women movement in society and who legitimize beating women, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* always advise his disciples to treat women gently. He says:

مهما دمت لاتظلمها  
وللدين العليم علمها

As long as you are living  
Do not treat woman badly  
And teach her religion.<sup>521</sup>

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is among the few who endorsed Sufi women. In his poem "*Misr Al Mu'aman*" he mentioned the celebrated Sufi women in Egypt and in the whole Islamic world:

أدعوك بسيدتى	هى زينب عمدتى
و بشمس الحق	السيدة نفيسة
هى بحر العلم	و غفيرة مصررة
وبعين الحكمة	فاطمة النبوية
بنخيرة الأمة	السيدة سكينة
وبذات البهجة	السيدة عائشة
وبعقد الدر	السيدة رقية
وجميع من تنسب	للسيدة الجدة
زوجات رسولنا	لا سيما التسعة
و العابدات	رابعة العدوية
لاتنس سودة	و أمينة الرملية
قل أم حسان	و هى الكوفية
قل أم الثورى	و أذكر ميمونة
قل أم الأسود	لا تنسى عبيدة
أذكر حبيبة	و أذكر شعوانة
أدعوك بهن	اصلاح ذريتى <sup>522</sup>

<sup>521</sup> *Al Sahafa fi Hadhrat al Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, available at:

<http://www.alsahafa.info/index.php?type=3&id=2147484364>

<sup>522</sup> *Shaikh Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai, Misr Al Muamana*, Al Asbat Centre, Khartoum, 2001, pp.10-11.

Oh God I call you by my highness, who is Zaynab<sup>523</sup>  
 I call you by the Sun of Rightness, who is Sayyida Nafissa<sup>524</sup>  
 She is the Sea of Knowledge and guarder of Egypt  
 I call you by the eye of wisdom, Fatima<sup>525</sup> the daughter of the Prophet  
 I call you by the Nation's support, Sayyida Sakina<sup>526</sup>  
 I call you by the source of happiness, Sayyida 'Aisha<sup>527</sup>  
 I call you by the chain of jewels Sayyida Ruqayyia<sup>528</sup>  
 And all who belongs to the grandmother  
 And wives of our Prophet, especially the nine  
 I call with the worshippers, Rabiyy'a al 'Adawiyya  
 And do not forget Sawda and Amna from Ramla<sup>529</sup>  
 Say Mother of Hasan from Kufa  
 Say Mother of Al Thawri and say Maymouna  
 Say Um al Aswad, do not forget 'Ubaida  
 Mention Habiba and mention Sh'awana<sup>530</sup>  
 Oh God I call you by all of them in order to reform my sons

*Shaikh* Al Bur'ai think that recalling these women will bless any one. He is almost the only Sudanese poet to stress the importance of Sufi women in his *Madih* (poetry).

The tolerance of *Shaikh* Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai towards women is evident in the participation of women in the *dhikr* circles. Though the *dhikr* circle is made by men, women are allowed to be present near by the circle i.e. there is no severe segregation between men and women while making rituals.<sup>531</sup> *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai admits education of women and that women can acquire high status. It is significant that he allotted special area in his *maseed* in order to teach women religious and other sciences. He appointed his sister Al Sara as responsible of teaching women of Al Zariba Sufi and Islamic sciences.<sup>532</sup>

Al Bur'ai advised his audience to treat women well in his different poems. He said that the Prophet advised his followers for good treatment of women. This is clear in the following verse:

يا خير الأنام أوصى بالأيامى و الضعفاء اليتامى أيضا ذو الفطام<sup>533</sup>

Oh best of mankind who urged for good treatment of women  
 And the weak orphans and babies as well.

<sup>523</sup> Zaynab is the daughter of Ali ibn Abi Talib, grand daughter of the Prophet.

<sup>524</sup> Nafissa is the daughter of Hasan Al Anwar ibn Zaid.

<sup>525</sup> Fatima is the daughter of Prophet Muhammad.

<sup>526</sup> Sakina is the daughter of Al Husain ibn Ali

<sup>527</sup> Aisha is the daughter of Ja'afar Al Sadiq

<sup>528</sup> Ruqayyia is the daughter of Ali ibn Abi Talib

<sup>529</sup> Ramla is a city in Palastine

<sup>530</sup> All the above mentioned Sufi women are saints in Iraq. (source: *Shaikh* Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai, *Misr Al Muama*, op.cit., pp.10-11)

<sup>531</sup> From the field work at Al Zariba, January 2000 and September 2002.

<sup>532</sup> Interview with Haja Al Sara, Al Zariba, 1 September 2002.

<sup>533</sup> From Al Bur'ai's cassette titled Al Ayama (the women).

Here *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai insisted on the good treatment of women, the orphans and the young children.

Another tradition that Al Bur'ai stood against in his poetry is the tradition of costly marriages. Al Bur'ai through his poetry as a first stage and at later stage through his associations stood against costly marriages. This is very clear in the following poem:

بإسلام يدين	بأمن ترضو دينه
ذوا الخلق الأمين	الحافظ يمينه
قط لا تحوجوهم	أسرعوا زوجوهم
كى تبيض وجوههم	بالخير توجوهم
قط لا ترغبوهم <sup>534</sup>	الشيلات أشطبوهم

Oh men if you find an accepted Muslim person  
Who keeps his word and has good morals  
Quick let him marry without taking much from him  
This is good for making white their faces (happy)  
Forget about marriage requirements

Al Bur'ai called for easy marriages as means of curing society from illegal relations of men and women. Al Bur'ai at a later stage formed non-governmental associations for arranging non-costly marriages for youth. This will be explained in the following chapter.

#### 5.5.4.3 Fighting harmful Sudanese traditions

*Shaikh* Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai used his *Madih* as a means of stopping and combatting the Sudanese harmful traditions such as female circumcision. He worked in the same trend of modern organizations of civil society which call for ending this unhealthy tradition. Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai says:

بالحيل أعتنوهن	
بالطيب أفتنوهن	
بالدين متنوهن	
قط لا تختنوهن <sup>535</sup>	
لزوجات أضر	فى ذلك مضرة
تزداد كل مرة <sup>536</sup>	أمراض مستمرة

Keep and save women with religion  
Make them beautiful with perfumes  
Never circumcise them  
In doing so, there is great pain, for the wives it is more harmful  
Continuous illnesses which increase every day.

*Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is among the few Sufis who combatted the harmful tradition of circumcision. He clarified that this bad tradition is very harmful for married women.

<sup>534</sup> Ibid.

<sup>535</sup> Interview with *Shaikh* Al Nour, Khartoum, 28 June 2007.

<sup>536</sup> From Al Bur'ai's cassette titled Al Ayama (the women).

Again he stood against another bad tradition that is deforming the face (cheeks) seeking beauty. Sudanese women used to deform their faces (cheeks) in order to be more beautiful. It is an unhealthy tradition and it is found in rural areas throughout the Sudan. Women usually used unhealthy means to deform their faces . In one of the poems Al Bur'ai said:

تشويه الصفات  
للخدين فتاتن  
كم من فؤاد ادین و فاتن  
نبهوا يا ولاة فى القرى و الفلاة  
إنقطعت صلاتن و لو صليت صلاتن<sup>537</sup>

Deforming faces  
Specially cheeks is a bad tradition  
There are so many men who refused to marry them  
Oh State Officials in villages and deserts  
Work to let women pay attention to these bad traditions  
Women even stopped praying

*Shaikh* Al Bur'ai called on the State officials for stopping bad social traditions that prevailed in the far rural areas. He called them to stand up and fight these traditions that harm women badly.

Al Bur'ai tried to address the socio-rural problems that affect every Sudanese village and town.

### 5.5.5 *Karama*.

One of the major aspects in Al Bur'ai's doctrine revealed in his *Madih* is the ability of the Prophet and the *awlia* (saint) to perform *Karama* even after their death. In one of the poems *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai addressed the Prophet and the *Awliya*:

سلام سلام عليكم يدوم      خذونا اليكم فنعم القدوم  
فإننا اليكم شددنا الرحال      بعزم قوى على كل حال  
فنرجو بكم يسهل الارتحال الى حيثما نبتغى او نروم  
فانتم حمانا الذى لا يضام      نزيل به فى ممر الايام  
علينا فجدوا عليكم سلام      نداكم يفوق لصوب الغمام  
متى نلتقى لو مناما بكم      وياتى لنا الفيض من ربكم  
فحسن الجزاء جدير بكم      نعيش و نحيا به كل يوم  
اذا ضاق أمر بنا أو نزل      على الناس كرب قضاه الاجل  
نلوذ بكم دائما لم نزل      على بابكم كى تزول الهموم

Peace peace upon you  
Take us for you. What a good arrival  
We started our travel to you with strong will  
We wish with your blessing, our travel becomes easy

<sup>537</sup> Ibid.

You are our supporters throughout life  
 To us be generous. Your generosity is quicker than the rainfall  
 When we will meet you even in dream and all the good comes from God.  
 Goodness is your habit we live with it every day  
 If we suffer a bad thing or a black fate was suffered by people  
 We wish your support, we stand on your door until sufferings pass away.

Affirmation of *karamat* of Sudanese Sufi figures is very clear in Al Bur'ai's poetry specially in his *Madih* of Shaikh Ahmed Al Tayyib Al Bashir, Al Burai said:

يا نفسى أمرحى	لطيب أمرحى
بزيارته تفرحى	يوم القيامة
سيرى و أمرحى	لى طيب أمرحى
لى حظوظك أطرعى	فى رياضو أسرحى
لمتونو أشرحى	بفضائلو صرحى
أيسا عن بابو	قطعا لا تبرحى
فى الدنيا و أخرى	لا شك بتفرحى
بصدرك أشرحى	و شئونك أصلحى
صاحب حزب الامان	من شر محن الزمان
و كرامتو الواضحة	كالشمس يا وهمان
فيضوا كالبحر	و أسرارو بالكيمان
ناشر فى عصره	لطريقة السمان
بشر مريده	بالفوز و الضمان
و الولاية الكبرى	و الخاتمة بالايامن
و الحظ الاوفر	فى مدة الازمان
لايضل لا يسلب	لا يرى مكروه كمان
فى رعاية الله	ووقايتة له امان
و المنكر السجمان	باء بالاسف ندمان <sup>538</sup>

Oh my spirit be glad for Al Tayyib of Um Marihi  
 Visiting him makes you happy in the last Day  
 Go and and be cheerful for Al Tayyib of Um Marihi  
 Show your luck and in his gardens walk  
 Explain his texts, talk about his goodness  
 Never go away of his door  
 In life and the life after it is sure you will be happy  
 Explain your secrets and make good your affairs  
 He is the author of Hizb Al Aman against misfortune  
 And his clear miracle is like the Sun, you unconscious  
 His generosity is like the sea and his secrets are many  
 He is the one who spread Al Samman order  
 He told his disciple with success and security  
 And the great saintship and final day with faith  
 The one who visits him never be misled, never be stolen  
 And never see any misfortune

<sup>538</sup> Shaikh Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai, "Liak Salam Mini", Al Asbat Centre, Khartoum, 2003, p.39.

He is in God's care and God's protection is salvation  
The poor unbeliever goes away with sorrow and regretion

In this poetry *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai talked about miracles of Ahmed Al Tayyib Al Bashir. For him the concept of *karama* among Sufi *Shaikhs* is undisputable

In order to analyze the importance of *karama* the researcher is not tackling the question that the *karama* is real or not. However, the researcher will concentrate on the importance of *karama* among the middle class. This importance is centred on two factors:

- a) Circulation of *karama* among the middle class. The *karama* spread widely among the middle class and it gives signs of change of a bad situation (either solving the problem of being layed out of jobs, poverty, illness, family problems etc.)
- b) The middle class finds in *karama* individual solutions to their problems.

### 5.5.6 Charity works

In his poetry *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai calls for charity work such as his poem:

جود ان دعنك بى مالك الايام أو ودعنك

Donate your share of wealth  
When changes are at best,  
Or when become your worst

In the above poem, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai resembles the Protestant call. This is by making charity work in order to achieve God's grace and means to achieve salvation. The Protestant ethic, also called the work ethic, is a code of morals based on the principles of thrift, discipline, hard work, and individualism. The adjective Protestant is explained by the fact that these qualities were seen to have been especially encouraged by the Protestant religion, especially those denominations based on the tenets (doctrine) of Calvinism.<sup>539</sup> As seen in chapter one, Weber was impressed by the seeming fact that modern capitalism had developed mainly in those areas of Europe where Calvinistic Protestantism had taken root early in the Protestant Reformation.<sup>540</sup> Here *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai called for charity work, hard work and self-discipline as new values for creating a new society. The fact that made him a real social reformer.

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<sup>539</sup> Protestant Ethics: General Information", available at : <http://mb-soft.com/believe/txn/protesta.htm>, p.1

<sup>540</sup> Ibid

### 5.5.7 Anti Salafi and Wahabi Stand

*Shaikh* Al Bur'ai could be considered as a phenomenon of reviving the Sudanese popular Sufism against the Wahabi incursion in Sudan. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai used poetry and *karama* making as tools of reviving popular Islam. According to Wahabis a lot of the rituals and practices of the popular Islam are condemned as non-true Islamic. A researcher who studied rural Islam in Sudan described this transformation as:

“Wad al-Abbas was founded by a Sufi *faqih*. Its inhabitants have always practiced Islam, but villager's religious life has not been static. The pace of recent changes astounded me. I returned to Wad al-Abbas in 1988 after a five and a half year absence and found villagers boldly critiquing an array of local practices while articulating new Islamic standards. Mourning rituals, wedding customs and reverence for holy men in particular were held up as examples of local deviation from true Islam”<sup>541</sup>

The writer directly assigned this phenomenon to the links with Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Kingdom exerted influence on Sudan at the national level by *pressuring* then-President Nimeiri to institute *Shari'a* law in 1983, and funding opposition groups like the Muslim Brotherhood. At the same time, Saudi Arabia attracted ordinary Sudanese from all walks of life as labor migrants, villagers from Wad al-Abbas found work in Saudi Arabia as truck drivers, electricians, factory workers and sale clerks. According to Bernal, the national economic crisis and identity crisis of Sudan and the labor migration of villagers to Saudi Arabia were catalysts for change, stimulating the rise of “Fundamentalist” Islam in the village.<sup>542</sup> However, the writer thinks that the term “Fundamentalist” does not give an analytical perception to the phenomenon. She thinks that the term “Orthodox Islam” is more analytical.

In the Islamic world there is an increase in the inflow of Saudi money and puritanical and militant Wahabi religious ideas. In Sudan this was through Sudanese immigrants working in Saudi Arabia and other oil-rich states in the Gulf and through the deliberate efforts of Saudi charities, and above all, the Saudi government. Beginning in the late 1970s, the Saudi regime came to see the spread of Sunni-Wahabi fundamentalism as the best ideological antidote to Iran's revolutionary Islam.<sup>543</sup>

The process of revival of Wahabi incursion started since the late 1970s, when many Sudanese worked in Saudi Arabia from the center of city of Khartoum to the very small villages far in the margins. According to Bernal, by the late 1980s, however, the focus of moral authority had shifted. Islam clearly had its center outside the community, local culture and behaviour were now to measure against new standards derived from

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<sup>541</sup> Vectorial Bernal, “Migration, Modernity and Islam in Rural Sudan”, in “Trafficking and Transiting: New Perspectives on Labor Migration”, *Middle East Report*, No. 211, Summer 1999, p.26,

<sup>542</sup> Ibid.

<sup>543</sup> Mohamed Ayoob, “South-East Asia After Taliban”, available at [www.Jstor.com](http://www.Jstor.com), p.6



external sources, particularly Saudi Arabia.<sup>544</sup> At the village level, she noticed the transformation in the system of belief. It is stated that until the early 1980s few villages were enclosed by country and walls. Compounds were demarcated by low mud walls or thorn brush fences, if at all. By the late 1988, well-to-do villagers were building high brick or cement walls around their homes definitively separating domestic and public space. Less fortunate villagers strove to achieve similar effects by placing burlap screens over their mud walls. Some women had begun to wear ankle-length robes underneath their *towbes* (the head-to-toe cloth wrap worn by adult women) rather than the short, sleeveless smokes (shawal) common in the early 1980s.<sup>545</sup>

In her analysis of the phenomenon of the Wahabi incursion at the village level, Bernal mentioned that fundamentalist Islam is therefore identified with progress and prosperity, exemplified by the life of leisure, technological advancement and material comfort that Saudi Arabia has come to represent. She adds that wealth and piety are interconnected in the stories villagers tell about Saudi life. Villagers perceive Saudi adherence to “orthodox” practices, their wealth and the abundance of goods and modern convenience in Saudi Arabia as interrelated. Modernity and Islamic orthodoxy are seen not as contradictory (as they may appear in the west), but as two facets of the same thing. Villagers associated the luxury consumption enjoyed by Saudis with a more literate, urban understanding of Islam, just as the view village provides and local Islamic tradition as interviewed.

Salafi or Wahabi groups antagonized *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, specially when he became a popular figure. The Wahabi negate the basic concept of the Sufis of the status of the Prophet. Contrary to what *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* believes, the Wahabi groups think that the Prophet is a normal person with no supernatural powers. On the other hand *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* and other Sufis think that the Prophet is the source of every supernatural powers of other Prophets. He says:

و ابراهيم من لظاهو	نجى لنوح من مياهو
به أيوب نال شفاهو	جده اسماعيل فداهو
منها الصيدة الفداها	آيه كثار طال مداها
أيضا للخير هداها <sup>546</sup>	أمته يسمع نداها

(The Prophet) saved Noah from the waters  
He saved Abraham from the fires  
He saved his grandfather Islam'il  
With his blessings Ayoub was cured  
He has so many miracles  
Of which the animal he makes free  
The Prophet listens to the call of his followers  
Also he directs them to the good path.

Another point on which the Wahabi groups differ from Al Bur'ai is the negation of extra-natural abilities of saints. Wahabis think that saints are normal people with no extra-natural abilities. Al Bur'ai praised Islamil Al Wali of the Islami'liyya order of Kordofan as following:

<sup>544</sup> Vectorial Bernal, op.cit., pp.27-28.

<sup>545</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>546</sup> Shaikh Al Bur'ai, *Riyyadh Al Janaa...*, op.cit., p.229.

قل يا ولي الله اسماعيل	ان ناب خطب في البلاد نزيل
قد خصه من ربه التبجيل	قطب الوصال الكردفاني الذي
و عليه عقل راجح و ثقيل	و له جنان بالمعارف مفعم
و منامه نصف النهار قليل <sup>547</sup>	عيناه ساهرتان إن جنّ الدجى

If a danger occurs in the country  
Say Oh Saint Islam'il  
The Kordofanian Pole who got God's glorification  
He has a thoughtful mind and full of knowledge  
During nights he is awake praying and in mid days he slightly sleep.

In the above poem, Al Bur'ai advised his audience that if a danger occurs in the country, just say Oh Saint Islam'il, the danger will disappear. This is because he is a pole supported by God's grace. The Wahabi's think that this is not possible and that Islma'il is a normal person with no supernatural power.

Also Al Bur'ai says on the supernatural powers of the saints:

الا و عنى ذاهب متلاشى	ما مسنى سو و جئت رحابهم
هم ملجئى فى كل خطب فاشى	هم عدتى عند الشدائد كلها
هم مورد لكل عطاشى	هم مولى عند الكروب و نصرتى

Whenever an evil touches me I address them it disappeared  
They are my support during all difficulties  
They are my refuge during grave dangers  
They are my refuge and my support they are sources for every thirst.

In the above poem, Al Bur'ai said that whenever an evil occurred to him, he addresses Sufi saints and thus all evils disappear. He thinks that the saints are his support during all difficulties and they are the safe refuge during great dangers. Al Bur'ai here revives the typical popular Sudanese religion, in which believe in the supernatural powers of the Sufi saints is a core element.

The researcher thinks that the following poem is a reply to the *Salafi* groups of Ansar Al Sunna who deny Al Bur'ai and other Sufis supernatural powers:

العيون نامت أنت وين؟	الرجال قامت انت وين؟
الرجال قامت	فى الحرور صامت
فى الاله هامت	فى البحور عامت
الرجال بان	للضعاف زانت
للعروض صانت	حاشا ما خانت
أرشدو السالكين	أنقذوا الهالكين
للنفس مالكين	قى الثلث باركين <sup>548</sup>

<sup>547</sup> Shaikh Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai, *Riyyadh Al Janna...*, op.cit., p.119.

<sup>548</sup> Shaikh Abdel Rahim Al Burai, *Laik Salam Mini*, Al Asbat Centre, Khartoum, 2003, p.34.

Eyes slept, where are you?  
 Men prayed all the night, where are you?  
 Men prayed all the night, in the heat they fast  
 In God they contemplate, in seas they swam  
 Men are ready for the weak they help  
 Men kept away of taboos, they never betrayed any one  
 They guided the disciples and they saved the dying ones  
 They control themselves, they pray in the last part of the night.

In an interview with the researcher, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* told her that the Wahabis, though they harmed the Sufis, they are not able to affect activities of the Sufis. Moreover *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* admitted that there is a Sufi revival in Sudan.<sup>549</sup>

The central doctrines of "*madaḍ*" and "*baraka*" of Al Burai are refused by the Wahabis or *Salafi* groups in Sudan. This led them to adopt an antagonist stance against Sufis. Another important point on which the Wahabis antagonized *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is his belief in the blessing in visiting tombs of Sufis. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* celebrated the tomb of his father *Shaikh Waqi' Allah*, also his annual visit to the tomb of *Shaikh Umar* in Al kiraida is a good example. For the Wahabis, visiting tombs where Sufis are buried is forbidden and considered as mal act.

A remarkable conclusion was reached by the previous Bernal, is that the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Sudan can be viewed as part of the decline of local community as the center of moral and social power. The case of Wad al-Abbas may help to explain why the movement toward "orthodox" Islam has appealed to by so many Muslims in the post-modern age. *Shiakh Al Bur'ai* was very active in reviving the role of local community as the center of moral and social power. The researcher argues that *Shaikh Al-Burai'* was able to revive a counter popular Islam through the miracles doing and colloquial poetry.

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* was faced by drastic anti-wave of Wahabism inside and outside Sudan. It has been stated that *Shaikh Al Burai* have been accused by Sudanese Wahabism of being infidel. Anti-Bur'ai wave started as preaching inside the mosques stating that *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* was ill faithed, pamphlets were circulated indicating the same ideas, but it did not attract the Sudanese masses. Later on, the Wahabis started to make lectures in cassettes and circulate them in buses and means of transport, giving drivers money in order to allow those who use public means of transport listen to them. Also, the Wahabis published pamphlets to be circulated in Saudi Arabia for free for Sudanese during the pilgrimage days.<sup>550</sup>

The researcher found that there are many web sites made by Wahabi to criticize *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. Such as Al Nilin.com which criticized his call for *karama* of *Shaikh Ahmed Al Tayyib Al Bashir*.<sup>551</sup> According to *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, any one died while putting him in his grave, his relatives say this is the grave of Ahmed Al Tayyib Al Bashir, the died person will be blessed and will not be cursed by God. Al Bur'ai said:

<sup>549</sup> Interview with *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, Al Zariba village, 4 January 2000.

<sup>550</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Burai' Al Sudan*, opcit., 2006, pp.113-114.

<sup>551</sup> Available at: <http://www.alnilin.com/vb/showthread.php?32954>

<p>يقوم مقام المعجزات يناسب  أنت و هي أنثى للذكورة تقلب  و أنه للقرآن يهوى و يطلب  يرثله يامن سمعتم تعجبوا  فصاحبه في القبر ليس يعذب<sup>552</sup></p>	<p>ألم تر أن الله أيده بما  كإحيائه ميتا و كالبننت بعدما  و قد جاءه الأعرابي بالتمر زائرا  فعلمه إياه في الوقت فابتدا  ومن قال هذا قبر احمد أولا</p>
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Don't you see that Ahmed El Tayyib was supported by God in things like miracles  
He brought a dead person to live, and a girl was converted to a boy  
A bedouin person came to him loving to learn the Quran  
He taught him instantly  
Any one who says this in the grave of Ahmed,  
the died person will not be cursed.

The Wahabists deny any ability of Ahmed Al Tayib Al Bashir to save or bless the dead persons or to convert a girl into a boy. On the contrary, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai affirmed all these miracles doing for Ahmed Al Tayyib Al Bashir founder of the Sammaniyya order in the Sudan, as we have seen above.

## 5.6 The Media

In the beginning of the 1970s, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai's poetry was circulated through cassette and in a very limited circle. At that time he was an ordinary individual *faki* limited to the local illiterate disciples. In the beginnings of the 1950s and 1960s, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was not aware of the importance of the media. According to his biographer, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai in this early stage was against the radio and TV.<sup>553</sup> In one of his poem he says:

لا تميتنا يا رب عليه<sup>554</sup>      الاغاني و حب الاذاعة

Oh God do not let us die of  
Love of songs and the Radio

However, this stance was changed in the late 1970s and after the visit of ex-President Nimeiri to Al Zariba. In the late 1970s, he started to be known to a wider audience through the cassettes. In fact this way could be considered as a unifying method for his audience and disciples. Though he wrote two collections in Arabic proper language, yet it is not circulated as his cassettes poetry. It is interesting to mention that later Al Bur'ai became aware of the role of the media. He used the media to disseminate his poetry especially since early 1980s. This fact could be touched in the following poem written in mid 1980s:

نور سوادى  
عندك أكون فى كل وادى

<sup>552</sup> Shaikh Al Bur'ai, *Riyyadh Al Janna*., op.cit., p.111.

<sup>553</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, Bur'ai Al Sudan, first edition, op.cit., p.86

<sup>554</sup> Ibid.

The light of my eyes  
I will be with you in every valley  
My *Madih* has been wide spread in cities and rural areas  
It is broadcasted in television and Radio

The researcher thinks that this evaluation of the media by *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai resulted in his transformation into a national figure. When *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai came to Khartoum and attracted many disciples he changed his view with regard to the media. Instead, he welcomed all the Sudanese, Arabic and international channels to film Al Zariba and made interviews with them. Examples of these links are the editor in chief of *Al Sha'ab*, the Egyptian newspaper, Adil Hussain, Al Jazeera Arabic Channel, Iqra Channel and the French Television Channel for the Orient in 1997. In addition he has a website on the internet [www.Alzariba.net](http://www.Alzariba.net).<sup>556</sup>

This glorification of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai in the national media (Radio and TV) is a result of being celebrated among different Sufi circles, and among the educated groups. Also because of his large followers throughout the Sudan. The *Ingazh* government tried to make use of his status, yet *Shaikh* Al-Bur'ai kept his independent stance towards the government, though he supported application of *Shar'ia*. Unlike the Burhaniyya in Egypt, who were officially recognized by President Sadat as apolitical tolerant Islam, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai kept a distance from the regime's attempts to use him as a propagandist.

According to Frishkopt, alongside *Shaikh* Muhammad al Burhani's personal spiritual gifts and active proselytizing, the expansion of the *tariqa* was no doubt aided by contextual factors, including the spiritual vacuum in Egypt following the 1967 war, 1970s materialism and economic inequality resulting from the *infitah* (economic "opening" to the West), and Sadat's policy of promoting apolitical Sufism as a political bulwark against leftists and Islamic militants, whom he often repressed; according to Hoffman, Sadat specifically promoted the Burhaniyya in the 1970s (Hoffman 1995:301). For many, overtly political currents of Islam were unappealing, and they could be dangerous. The Burhaniyya offered a safer alternative for a resurgent Islamic revival.<sup>557</sup>

## 5.7 Conclusion

Poetry of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai represented an efficient tool in moral change and in religious and Sufi re-ideation of the Sudanese society. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai used poetry and *karama* making as tools of reviving popular Islam. What is striking in the poetry of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is that it is celebrated among the illiterate and literate audience at the same time. This is because it is composed of simple words that could be understood by literate and illiterate at the same time. Though *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai has two volumes of poetry in classic Arabic language, large section of the Sudanese middle class celebrated the colloquial part of *Shaikh* Al-Burai' poetry. This part has dominated the cassettes

<sup>555</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Bur'ai Al Sudan*, second edition, op.cit., p.105.

<sup>556</sup> Ibid., pp.122-123.

<sup>557</sup> Michael Frishkopt, "Changing modalities....". op.cit., p.13.

shops and the media. *Shaikh* Al-Burai' was an excellent user of colloquial language to disseminate the Sufi values and Sufi knowledge, and moderate version of Islam at large.

The thing that led to wide spread of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai's poetry is the use of Prophetic traditions in addition to praising all Sudanese Sufi figures. Also he used his poetry as means for transmitting Islamic values and for preaching. In his poems you find the call to strengthen faith, to practice rituals and taking care of God in dealings and keeping family relations and relations with all people, a call to establish the virtuous society. The poetry calls for love between all people, the need to be polite and the call for sticking to the Sufi path. Al Bur'ai used *Madih* to disseminate, Sudanize and glorify the Prophetic tradition. *Madih* of Al Bur'ai is also used in the affirmation of *karama* and miracles doing in the Sudanese Sufism. Here *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is considered as really reviving Sudanese popular Sufism.

It is important to answer the question what did the educated class found in the poetry and teachings of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai? The researcher found that the educated middle class found psychological satisfaction after being politically marginalized and economically impoverished. This psychological balance is meant to achieve salvation. In some of his poetry, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai provided means to achieve God's Grace.

The tolerant and non-aggressive nature of Sufism becomes attractive to the educated middle class. The non-rigid application of *Shari'a* is one of the important factors that attracted the educated Sudanese to Sufism in general and to *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai in particular.

It is clear that the poetry of Al Bur'ai equates litanies. In other words, poetry represents a means of performing Sufi rituals. The poetry of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai represents a complement to litanies. Some poems are treated as if they are litanies as they bring blessings and salvation. This twining of poetry and litanies of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai suited the educated middle class. As every one could upgrade himself in the Sufi path by performing litanies and listening to poetry. Moreover, the individual can achieve his needs by doing litanies only, without the intercession of any Sufi *Shaikh*, not even *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai himself. It is the individualist way of self-purification that attracted the educated middle class.

*Shaikh* Al Bur'ai by his insistence on the mediation of the Prophet directly represents neo-Sufi link and not through mediation of the holymen, a fact that attracted the middle class. The Sufi order of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is an open ended *tariqa* as mentioned in the last chapter. In other words its membership is open for any person. Poetry represents an important tool of attracting the educated Sudanese to be sons of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai. Any person who listens and contemplates *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai's poetry is considered as his son (disciple). In this way it attracted the educated Sudanese.

Poetry played an efficient tool in the transformation of Al Bur'ai into a national figure, as it was circulated in cassettes and through the national media. This transformation into a national figure took place during the *Ingazh* government. Therefore, the political development of the *Ingazh* government influenced the transformation of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai into a national figure. This will be shown in the coming last chapter.

## Chapter Six

### ***Shaikh Al Bur'ai and The Ingazh Era: The Transformation into a National Figure***

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The importance of analyzing the era of the *Ingazh* government for this research is that the transformation of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* into a national figure took place during this period. The importance of the *Ingazh* era is centered in that it witnessed the peak of the disintegration of the fragile educated middle class as a result of reasons mentioned in chapter two in this research. The outcome of this disintegration of the educated middle class resulted either in that some of its factions followed Sufi ideation or reorganized itself in Islamic movements.

Independence in Sudan was a result of external factors rather than internal ones. These factors represented in the weakness of Britain and France after the second world war and the appearance of United States and the Soviet Union as new international powers. Political Independence was secured depending on external circumstances such as the co-domini partners relations especially after July 1952. All under-developed states including Sudan entered in a transitional stage in which there was an internal conflict between modern forces and traditional ones. Within this conflict appeared the southern war in 1955 and the regional demands took place as early as 1946. The accumulation of these regional problems throughout modern politics in Sudan led to state crisis. One of the results of this crisis is the disintegration of the middle class as leading political strata.

According to a report compiled by the US Foreign Policy magazine and the US-based Fund for Peace think-tank-ranked nations according to their viability. Sudan was the world's top state failure.<sup>558</sup> This crisis situation in the social mind of the masses created a need for a savior. The disintegrated middle class is not an exception in seeking a savior.

As argued before that the appearance of savior figures in history coincide with the situation of instability and chaos. In his study of Morocco saints, Cornel states that:

“To illustrate the applicability of a model based on tradition, an eighteenth-century account of the life of the *qutb* Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Jazuli will be used as both a historic and didactic discussion that reveals the central role of the *wali* in Morocco as the symbolic embodiment of the sum of religious ethics. The activity of such an individual in the political arena will be seen not as directed toward the gain of personal power as an end in

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<sup>558</sup> Sudan Tops 'Failed States Index', BBC, 2 May 2006. Available at: <http://www.globalpolicy.org/nations/sovereign/failed/2006/0502failedindex.htm>

itself, but rather as an attempt to reestablish ethical norms in a society slipping into chaos”.<sup>559</sup>

It is argued that this revival of Sufism in Sudan among intellectuals could be in part attributed to the conflict between secular forces and Islamists over the application of the *Shari'a* penal codes. In September 1983, as part of an Islamization campaign, President Nimeiri announced his decision to incorporate traditional Islamic punishments drawn from the *Shari'a* (Islamic law) into the penal code. This was the beginning of a long battle between followers of the *Shari'a* and advocates of a secular state. As such, the inclusion of the *Shari'a* into state law was controversial even among Muslim groups.<sup>560</sup>

This battle between the two forces produced a third party that accepts Islam within the version of Sufism as Sufism provides a more tolerant version of Islam. Sufism provide a third way in which there is religious life but with no rigid application of *Shari'a* penal codes.

Most of this third group is members of the middle class. So it could be stated that Sufi revival started in early 1980s in Sudan. This era witnessed the appearance of the *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai, *Shaikh* Al Sharief Muhammad Al Khatim in Karkoj, *Shaikh* Muhamad Abdu Al Burhani, *Shaikh* Al Fatih Qarib Allah as glorified Sufi *Shaikhs*. It is found that Sufi institutions with it's political tolerance attract the educated classes. It is argued that certain Sufi beliefs and practices make Sufism more compatible with democratic culture than Islamic doctrine demanding the establishment of Islamic state and rigid application of *Shari'a* law.<sup>561</sup> This political tolerance is one of the reasons for the ability of Sufi *tariqas* to attract the educated groups of the middle class in different Islamic countries in general and Sudan in particular.

It is assumed by many that the mass initiation into Sufi *tariqas* took place in the 1990s as a reaction to the orthodox brand of Islam imposed by the government.<sup>562</sup> This view represents oversimplification of the phenomenon. The researcher found that this transformation of the sections of the middle class started earlier than the *Ingazh* government, since the late 1970s. This transformation is caused by internal causes that are represented by the appearance of new strata of bureaucratic bourgeoisie and the military coups at the political level and the adoption of structural adjustments policies and liberalization at the economic level. Both levels led to the marginalization of the old middle class. External factors such as the wider Islamic revival in the Middle East led to Sufi revival at the local levels. This is in addition to encouragement by different political regimes in Islamic countries to Sufism in order to combat militant *Salafi* Islam as took place in Egypt.

It is argued that the relations between states and religious institutions and communities have for more than a century been a central concern in the study of Middle Eastern and other Islamic societies. The study of the life of Prophet Muhammad and the

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<sup>559</sup> Vincent J. Cornel, op.cit., p.69.

<sup>560</sup> "National Overview-Sudan", available at: <http://altavista.com>.

<sup>561</sup> Shelon Gellar, "Varieties of Religious Doctrines and Institutions in Africa and Their Impact on the Democratization Process", paper presented at Workshop in Political Theory and Political Analysis, Indiana Univeristy. P.8. Available at: [http://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/archive/00002195/01/W07-9\\_Gellar\\_DLC.pdf](http://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/archive/00002195/01/W07-9_Gellar_DLC.pdf).

<sup>562</sup> Taha Al N'uman, "Al Bur'ai: Daymumat al Tadyun al Sha'bi fi Muwajaht al Siahq Al Rasmiyya", *Al Sahafa*, No. 4212, 25 February 2005. P.9. (Al Burai' :The Continuity of Popular Religiosity against official religion).



Caliphate and of Muslim juristic, political and philosophical theory have all reinforced the notion that Islam does not have a church institution. It is stated that in Islam, unlike other religions, from the outset the role played by the Prophet is intermingled. Prophet Muhammad played the role of a religious leader as well as a political leader. This fact and the religio-political nature of Islam, led to an interconnection between the religious and the political throughout the Islamic history.<sup>563</sup> As well this fact paved the way for charismatic religious leaders to appear in Muslim societies. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai represented a charismatic leader that attracted the newly marginalized educated middle class.

Religion became safe refuge for sections of the middle class. Either in the form of being members of the Islamic Movement in Sudan or being initiated into Sufi orders. This fact of marginalization of sections of the educated middle class led to the phenomenon of the search for a savior. This savior happened to be *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai. As the phenomenon of revival of small Sufi orders continued during the *Ingazh* regime, it is important to see the relation of the regime with small Sufi orders.

The development of the phenomenon of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai and the revival of Sufism not be separated from development of international politics. It could be understood as a phenomenon confronting growing militant Islam inside and outside Sudan. This will be shown in the coming section.

## 6.2 International Politics: Sufism as Combating Militant Islam

Starting with the assassination of the ex-President Anwar Al Sadat, the appearance later of Al Qa'ida and Taliban, militant Islam comes to the forefront of politics in Islamic countries. The violent attacks of transnational terrorism demonstrated ferocity via al-Qa'ida coordinated bombings of the U.S embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar Al Salam, Tanzania in August 1998. Two hundreds and twenty-four lives were stolen and more than 5,000 people were injured.<sup>564</sup> After the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the killing of 3,000 people, the issue of militant Islam becomes an annoying matter throughout the world. Sudan was not an exception to this global development.

For years, Islamic militancy has presented itself as a security issue on both the domestic and global scenes, which generated an intense academic debate about its nature, scope and strength in Arab-Islamic societies.<sup>565</sup>

Wahabis and *Salafi* groups are the backbone of this militant Islam. Wahabism has had mixed success in radicalizing Muslims in the Horn of Africa. In Ethiopia, Wahabis have been connected to reported mosque burnings, thereby introducing intra-Islamic divisions into an already volatile ethno-religious mix.<sup>566</sup> The root of this Wahabi *Salafi* militant Islam was in early 1980s. The insurgency against the Soviet supported Marxist regime in Afghanistan in the 1980s, aided financially by the United States and Pakistan, augmented the trend of militant Islam. It did so principally by providing ready

<sup>563</sup> Amani M. El Obeid, "Doctrine and Politics: The Sammaniyya *Tariqa* in the Sudan", unpublished M.sc. dissertation, University of Khartoum, 1997, p.20.

<sup>564</sup> David Dickson, "Political Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Need for a new Research\ and Diplomatic Agenda", *Special Report*, no. 140, United States Institute of Peace, May 2005, p. 4.

<sup>565</sup> Simon Haddad and Hilal Khashan, "Islami and Terrorism: Lebanese Muslim Views on September 11", *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 46, No.6, Dec. 2002, p. 812.

<sup>566</sup> David Dickson, op.cit., p.5.

recruits to the militant Islamic cause in the form of young refugees, many of whom were enrolled in religious schools close to the borders of Afghanistan that were run by fundamentalist Pakistani groups and funded largely by Saudi sources. These schools not only provided shelter and food to their students, they also inculcated among them a *jihadist* ideology based upon the strict and intolerant Wahabi version of Sunni Islam. The Taliban (which means those who search for knowledge) were the products of these schools.<sup>567</sup>

Sudan hosted Osama bin Laden from 1991-1996. However, the *Ingazh* government ordered Osama bin Laden to leave Sudan in 1996. Later the government publicly renounced terrorism against the backdrop of a long-running civil war and engaged in revitalized efforts to normalize relations with the United States beginning in 2000 and accelerating after September 11, 2001.<sup>568</sup> The *Ingazh* government collaborated with the United States in investigations on the suspected cells of militant Islam lived in Sudan. This step of the *Ingazh* government was created as a result of conflicting stances with the Qai'da who antagonized peace process in Sudan and antagonized the government stance in Darfur.

Sufi orders throughout the world came at the forefront of opposing radical militant Islam. A good example of this fact is in Turkey, where the Naqshbandiyya order was the first to condemn Al Q'ida terrorist acts. *Shaikh* Kabbani who is the deputy leader of the Naqshbandi Haqqani Sufi order, which has over two million adherents around was the first Muslim leader to warn the United States about the imminent threat posed by Osama bin Laden and Al-Qa'ida terrorist network, he also led the Muslim worked in immediately condemning the attacks of September 11.<sup>569</sup>

Encouragement of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai by state donations and official media patronage could be understood within the above background. This step of encouragement of Sufism comes in accordance with policies to defeat radical/militant Islam on one hand court Sufis to the service of the *Ingazh* programme on the other hand.

### 6.3 The *Tamkin* Programme

The *Ingazh* government in dealing with Sufi orders went through two stages:

1) First stage of the period 1989-1999: This period witnessed antagonizing the major Sufi orders such as Ansar and the Khatmiyya. During this period, even small Sufi orders that are not linked to Islamic movement were antagonized. Under the leadership of Turabi, in 1992 the Khatmiyya *tariqa* was dissolved, and its properties and financial assets were confiscated. The following year the government nationalized the holy sites of the Ansar and Umma sect in Omdurman while launching a campaign against those Sufi Brotherhoods, the *turuq*, whose beliefs and religious practices did not conform to the religious doctrines of the National Islamic Front.<sup>570</sup>

<sup>567</sup> Mohammed Ayoob, "South-West Asia After the Taliban", p.6., available at [www.JSTOR.com](http://www.JSTOR.com).

<sup>568</sup> David Dickson, op.cit., p. 6

<sup>569</sup> Zeyno Baran, "Understanding Sufism and its Potential Role in US Policy", Nixon Centre Conference Report, March 2004, available at: <http://www.nixoncenter.org/publications/monographs/Sufism.pdf>.

<sup>570</sup> Robert O. Collins, "Africans, Arabs and Islamists: From The Conference Table to The Battlefield in The Sudan", *African Studies Review*, Vol. 42, No.2, (September 1999), p.108.

2) Second stage of the period 1999-: Under this stage the Islamist realized the insecurity of their revolution and subsequently moderated their hostility against these popular and widespread religious fraternities. The old policy of courting small Sufi orders followed by Nimeiri was recalled. Small Sufi orders were addressed in order to support the regime which lacked political legitimacy. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* and other Sufi *Shaikhs* mentioned above are good examples.

It is important to review the development of the *Ingazh* government in order to understand these two stages affecting Sufi orders in modern Sudan. The *Ingazh* government seized power in Sudan by a military coup d'état. It is assumed that the major structural causes of military coups in Africa are: A) political development ideas about a participation crisis rooted in the tension between an increasingly mobilized citizens and weak political institutions, B) the political centrality of the military as rooted in its resources and organizational cohesion, C) plurality, competition and dominance theories of ethnic antagonism and D) world system dependency ideas about the political turmoil created by export specialization and foreign capital penetration.<sup>571</sup> However, for the Islamic movements seizing the state apparatus, as will be explained below, is an important issue.

For the brand of political Islam, "state" represents a central concept. It is argued that the vast literature on political Islam pre-dominantly offers the following explanation for centrality of "state" in the discourse of Islamists: the state is pivotal to Islamism because, unlike other religions, Islam (as a faith) does not make a distinction between religion and state. This fact could be one aspect of the phenomenon. Another aspect is that it is not only because Islam theologically entails the fact that the state naturally flows from the very character of Islam, but rather because of the configuration of the early twentieth century socio-political formations under which the state as an institution had acquired an unprecedented role in expanding its realm of action and scope of its effect. Since Islamism was a response to the modern state formation with its far-reaching consequences it was only logical that the "state" became the center of its discourse. Thus it was not due to Islamic theology that the state became central to Islamism; on the contrary; it was the unusual expansion of the early twentieth century state and its imprint on almost every domain of life that drove Islamists to make the state central to theology.<sup>572</sup>

Many writers argued that the Islamists made use of the weakness of the Sudanese state institutions. The political achievement of the Sudanese Islamists in the past two and a half decades is certainly impressive. This achievement resulted from an interplay of a subjective factor pertaining to the movement's nature and an objective factor relating to the overall context within which it operated. On the subjective level, the movement succeeded in virtually appropriating the discourse of Islamic revival while adopting a position of unscrupulous pragmatism. On the objective level, the movement made maximum use of the intrinsic weakness of the country's institutions that were further undermined by the pernicious (destructive) role played by the military regimes of Ibrahim

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<sup>571</sup> Augustine J.Kposowa and J. Craiq Jenkins, "The Structural Causes of Military Coups in Postcolonial Africa 1957-1984", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol.99, No.1, July 1993, p.127.

<sup>572</sup> Irfan Ahmad, "The State in Islamist Thought", *ISIM Review*, No.18, Autumn 2006, p.12.

Abbud and Ja'far Nimeiri.<sup>573</sup> The historical development of the Islamic movement was not confined to democracy or tolerance. According to the previous writer, because of the essentially anti-democratic nature of the Islamist movement it did not have the slightest scruples about making its peace with the Nimeiri regime and aligning itself with its institutions and policies in the late 1970s. By this time, the struggle for the soul (leadership) of the Islamist movement was resolved in favor of Turabi's line - indeed, the entire movement came to be molded in his image assuming a pragmatic, calculating, and ruthless character.<sup>574</sup>

It has been stated that in Sudan, many *coups d'états* are motivated more by discontent than a vision of a brave new world. The officers who seized control of the Sudan government on 30 June 1989 were committed to building a "New Sudan" from the debris of a lost generation of Sudanese in search of an identity. The "New Sudan" would be defined by Islam and the Qur'an as interpreted by the National Islamic Front (NIF) in doctrines spread in Arabic. Upon these twin pillars would reside a defined and homogenous Sudanese society. Al Bashir imposed a state of emergency and formed the Revolutionary Command Council, which he chaired, to serve as an executive legislative organs. It revoked the transitional Constitution of 1985, abolished the parliament, banned political parties, detained all political party leaders, and closed the newspapers. The leaders of student groups, unions, professional associations and political parties faced arbitrary arrest and disappeared in "ghost houses" and prisons where they were tortured or killed.<sup>575</sup> In October 1993 the Revolutionary Command Council was dissolved, the leader of the *coup d'état*, Lt. Gen. 'Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir, became a civilian president and all the essential offices of government were securely controlled by members of the National Islamic Front or their sympathizers. The creation of the New Sudanese required them to abandon those heretical ethnic, linguistic, social and indigenous religious traditions and replace them with allegiance to the Islamist ideology.<sup>576</sup>

The military officers and politicians who seized power on 30 June 1989 held Arabic-Islamic vision of the identity of the Sudan. They maintained that Islam, the majority religion, and Arabic, the language of the Quran, represent the essential bases for the country's nationalism and should define its legal, political, and economic systems. Arabic should supercede indigenous languages as well as English, the colonizer's language. Minorities must either merge into that Islamic culture or be exempt from a few religious punishments. Christians could practice their faith, but adherents of traditional African faiths could be compelled to convert, since they were not monotheist "people of the book." The regime sought to compel the public to follow its rigidly defined social code, cultural norms, and religious forms.<sup>577</sup> The primary function of the state-directed regime, according to the Islamists model, is to operate in a manner that attempts to

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<sup>573</sup> Mohamed Mahmoud, "Islam and Islamization in Sudan: The National Islamic Front", US Institute of Peace Conference, 16-17 September 1997. available at: <http://www.usip.org/religionpeace/rehr/sudanconf/Mahmoud.html>

<sup>574</sup> Ibid.

<sup>575</sup> International Crisis Group, "God, Oil and Country: Changing the Logic of War in Sudan", African Report No.30. Brussels, 2002, p. 14.

<sup>576</sup> Robert O. Collins, "African, Arabs and Islamists: From the Conference Tables to the Battlefields in the Sudan", *African Studies Review*, Vol.42, No.21, September 1999, p.106.

<sup>577</sup> Ann Mosley Lesh, *The Sudan-Contested National Identities*, Indiana University Press, 1998, pp.94-95.

demolish or converge in their system other autonomous institutions that normally act independently within the spheres of the civil, religious and the political societies. This is an important representation as the totalitarian setting attempts to deploy the state power to eliminate and demolish all civil and political societies, spheres and institutions. Within this approach to power, the Islamists in the Sudan, their strategists and allies tried very hard to establish such a state.<sup>578</sup>

The National Islamic Front, made promotion of a very radical brand of Islam a central goal when it assumed power in 1989. The government's "Civilizational Project", whose original architect was Turabi, has a sweeping social agenda. Efforts to impose it have often been brutal. One Sudanese analyst described the government's strategy as "Islamic Stalinism" and argued:

The National Islamic Front wants to mould the Sudanese society into a modern Islamic state, whose mission is internationalist. They seek to rebuild a true Islamic society. This entails social engineering, reducing diversity and multiple elements into a single conception of true Islam, which is their own version. It is the regimentation of all society into one vision.<sup>579</sup>

It is noticed that, "With the dismissal of Turabi from the government, the tactic have changed and become less overtly radical". The tool for implementation of the Civilizational Project is known as the "Comprehensive Call", which targets social customs and traditions and religious practices deemed unorthodox. Describing the response to this policy International Crisis Group explained:

"Attacked in their very character, the Sudanese mounted creative forms of passive and less passive resistance to the attempts to cast them in one mould. Sufi sects have opposed with a resounding 'no' to all forms of appropriation that the National Islamic Front employed to bring them under its broad wing. These attempts account for much of the decision of Beja *Shaikhs* to join the armed rebellion against the National Islamic Front, although they themselves are Muslims".<sup>580</sup>

In many different occasions, Dr. Turabi criticized the institution of Sufi orders he said: "The mere reciting of the *awrad* do nothing to the Islamic building and Islamic social change".<sup>581</sup> This stance of Dr. Turabi was motivated by his idea that Sufi orders should be contained. The conference of *Al dhikr Wa Al Dhakirin* (conference of worshipping and worshippers) is a good example of this stance. In 1994, the *Ingazh* government represented by Ministry of Social Planning tried to unify the small Sufi

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<sup>578</sup> Abdullahi A. Gallab, "The Insecure *Rendezvous* between Islam and Totalitarianism: The Failure of the Islamist State in The Sudan", *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Spring 2001, p.1.  
Available at: [www.findarticles.com](http://www.findarticles.com).

<sup>579</sup> International Crisis Group, Brussels, "God, Oil and Country: Changing the Logic of War in Sudan", Belgium, 2002, p. 94.

<sup>580</sup> *Ibid*, p.95

<sup>581</sup> Public Lecture in Friendship Hall, broadcasted by Sudanese T.V, 1997.

*tariqas* into one entity. Due to different and contradicting political stances of the Sufi *tariqas*, the experience failed.

The above mentioned conference came as a result of the general plan of the Islamists to control all aspects of social life. One of the basic features of the early era of the *Ingazh* government is the Islamic social planning. It is part of the Comprehensive Call focused on the core areas of the North which have been Muslim for centuries, but where the NIF believes that Islamic values have lapsed. Professor Zakaria Bashir Imam, who was of the International African University in Khartoum and a veteran NIF activist has written authoritatively on the subject.

“The idea of Islamic Social Planning means a continuing revolution for the remoulding of the human being and the institution in society, in accordance with Koranic guidance Islamic social planning aims to achieve:

- 1.A complete and comprehensive remoulding of the Islamic personality with a view to making it a living honest and conscious characterization of Islamic concepts, values and teachings.
2. Build and reconstruct all state institutions on principles derived from the Koran.
- 3.Establish an Islamic society formed on the basis of Islamic principles and rules without coercion.
- 4.Establish an Islamic state to propagate right, justice, spread peace and security on all fields and actualized solidarity, compassion and support among all people, especially Moslems.
- 5.Establish an international Islamic civilization and a new international order based on justice and fairness and the recognition of the cultures of others and their cultural religious and ethnic distinction.”<sup>582</sup>

Another important principle of the Comprehensive Call is *tamkin*, which means empowering Islamists and enabling them to hold a dominant position in their society. This has particular relevance to Southern Sudan, but is also applied in the North, where it entails establishing National Islamic Front dominance and hegemony over key commercial and social sectors.

Considering the aggressive attitude and the waves of purges and replacement of the higher and the middle levels of the state bureaucracy by party loyalists since 1989, in addition to the fact that these groups have never been representative or part of the dominant political class in the country, the Islamists party's designs ran counter to the interest of the bureaucracy. As the bureaucratic stratum, which is composed of government officials, salaried employees, and professionals, has a long history and experiences with different types of regimes, taming such groups by the political power of the Islamists has not been easy. Historically, this sector is "characterized by the exercise

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<sup>582</sup> For more details see African Rights, *Food and Power in Sudan: A Critique of Humanitarianism*, May 1997, African Rights, pp.190- 194.

of delegated authority" and through skillful management of the power of professional organizations, constituted a major player in Sudanese political life. Their status position, "potentially at the center of power and knowledge" enabled them to define themselves as playing a dual role. First, as occupants of executive positions, those of them who rung in higher echelons of bureaucratic hierarchies have always been part of the decision-making process in running the country's day-to-day affairs. It is true that the last three decades have witnessed a serious brain drain in this area due to the immigration of higher numbers of employees across their different ranks, higher rates of political purges especially by the existing regime, and the decline in their earnings from the job compared to others outside the government hierarchies.<sup>583</sup>

The process of *tamkin* led to the ideological disintegration of the already fragile middle class. The planners of the *Ingazh* government knew that the educated middle class is the main class that could threaten the process of Islamization under the NIF version of Islam, as it composed of intellectuals, writers, poets, professionals, technicians, university staffs, physicians, lawyers and engineers. Those factions of the society and their unions were able to throw down the May regime. So the *tamkin* process was basically a process to throw down the politically active and politically conscious middle class. Laying off for public use, prisoning and torturing for the politically active members of the middle class in the early days of the *Ingazh* government were efficient means to demoralize a weak middle class. All these factors led to the disintegration of the fragile Sudanese middle class and led to its search for a saviour and refuge in Sufi circles. The retreat of the role of political parties in public life brought about a similar retreat of actors of civil society and therefore a vacuum created that filled with Sufi circles.

The weak ability of political mobilization of the *Ingazh* government, which is by its lack of political legitimacy, led the government to try to attract the small Sufi *tariqas*. This weak ability of political mobilization was reflected in the early elections of 1993. During 1993 officials stated that 1,600 basic congresses were held in villages and districts, in which more than five million citizens participated. No political parties were allowed since the government argued that congresses provide the best way to express the pluralism of opinion. When local elections were finally held in fall 1994, turn out was minimal and, in some cases, opponents of the government defeated NIF candidates. For example, in Atbara—the main industrial and railway city, which had a history of politicized trade unionism—most NIF candidates lost to members of the (illegal) Communist and Democratic Unionist parties. Security forces then arrested nearly two hundred persons, including the successful candidates, and the government voided the election results. Regional-level elections in the spring of 1995 were also problematic, even though the government tried to avoid the previous fiasco by requiring candidates to support the government credo.<sup>584</sup> Therefore, lack of political legitimacy was behind the addressing small Sufi orders by the *Ingazh* government. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was among those who have been addressed. The following sections review the political life of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai and why the *Ingazh* regime was tolerant to him.

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<sup>583</sup> Abdullahi A. Gallab, op.cit., p.13.

<sup>584</sup> Ann Lesch, op.cit., p.103.

#### 6.4 *Shaikh Al Bur'ai's Political Life*

The political life of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is divided into many stages:

**The local level in Al Zariba in 1950s:** at this stage *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* was a member of the National Unionist Party. Al Zariba was part of the local political constituency of Dar El Reeh, This constituency is known to be the stronghold of the Unionists. According to *Shaikh Al Bur'ai's* son, Al Nour, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* believed that Sayyid Ali Al Mirghani is a holy person.<sup>585</sup> Accordingly, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* supported the Unionist Party in the first legislative elections (1953 and 1957). However, when the Unionist party divided into two parties, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* took an independent stance.<sup>586</sup> *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* has a famous poem condemning practicing politics:

و لم أصحب مدى أليام ساسة	ترانى لا أميل الى السياسة
تموه بالبلاغة و الملاسة	لعلمى أن مبدأها نفاق
لنيل العز فيها و القداسة <sup>587</sup>	يبيع الدين بالدنيا ذووها

You see that I do not like politics and I did not follow politicians  
Because I know it starts with hypocrisy and art of speech  
Politicians sell religion for live in order to be rich and sacred.

The above poetry was made in 1958, when in *Shaikh Al Bur'ai's* constituency there was a competition between his brother who was representing the People's Democrati Party and his cousin who was supporting the National Unionist Party.<sup>588</sup>

**The National Level in 1974-1984:** At this stage, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* was contacted by the former president Nimeiri after the failed *coup d'etat* of the Communist party. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* became famous after the first visit of the former President Nimeiri to Al Zariba in 1974. Nimeiri started to visit most of the small Sufi centers throughout Sudan after the failed Communist coup d'etat of July 1971 in order to gain their support.

After that visit *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* was introduced to local press and the media. In an interview with the press, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* said that the first visit of ex-president Nimeiri to Al Zariba was in 1974 when he and his disciples made a grand festival for welcoming him.<sup>589</sup> Since then *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* has strong relation with the ex-president Nimeiri and had access to the Presidential Palace. According to Salim, from the start the May regime suffered from a lack of coherent political ideology, and the situation worsened with the exclusion of its earlier alliance elements. As sources of support,

<sup>585</sup> Interview with Shaikh Al Nour Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai, Khartoum, 28 June 2007.

<sup>586</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Burai: Al Sudan*, Al Asbat Centre, Khartoum, 2006, p. 66.

<sup>587</sup> Ibid., p.57.

<sup>588</sup> Abdel Latif El Boni and Abdel Latif Sied, *Al Bur'ai Rajul al Wagat*, Qaf Publishing House, Khartoum, 2000, p.23.

<sup>589</sup> *fi Hadrat Al Bur'ai*, *Al Sahafa*, no.3703, 11 September 2003.



traditional political parties were completely rejected, as were the communists, the only plausible alternative was populism. This Nimeiri sought among the smaller religious *turuq*.<sup>590</sup> Salim went further to elucidate that Nimeiri began a move to strengthen his relations with leaders of small religious *turuq* whose membership seemed to increase in the wake of the social vacuum created by curtailment of religious-based parties and abolishment of political organizations as well as social organizations with political inclination (e.g. associations based on ethnic origin). Ministries and senior bureaucratic posts were given to persons with Sufi background or who happened to be related to the families of the religious *turuq*.<sup>591</sup>

In the early 1970s Nimeiri started to invite Sufis belonging to various brotherhoods to the presidential palace during the month of Ramadan. He also introduced an annual 'Quran Contest' under his auspices, which thereafter became a major annual event. He established a Ministry of Endowments (*awqaf*) and Religious Affairs, in order to lure the smaller Sufi orders to his side. In 1974, Nimeiri started to invite members of the Sammaniyya, the Ismai'ilyya, the Qadiriyya and other Sufi orders to go on the pilgrimage to Mecca at government expense, including free medical services while abroad.<sup>592</sup> *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was not an exception to this general trend. He was among those have been invited and given governmental facilities.

**During the third democratic era 1985-1989:** At this stage *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was very neutral who represented an ordinary individual Sammani *Shaikh* who has no any relations with politics or with the Presidential Palace. However, during this period he kept strong relations with most prominent politicians such as Sadiq Al Mahdi and Mohamed Osman Al Mirghani who visited him in Al Zariba in mid 1980s. El Boni and Saied mentioned that *Saikh* Al Bur'ai, in 1980s, is among the few who attended the first party conference of the National Islamic Front.<sup>593</sup> However *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai's relation with the Islamist movement will be discussed further in the coming sections.

**During the *Ingazh* government in the period 1989-2005:** This period witnessed the transformation of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai from an individual *faki* in Kordofan to a national figure. During this period *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai appeared as a social reformer who has strong links to figures of the *Ingazh* regime. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai supported the regime but with some reservations that kept his independence. This independence was very clear in his strong relations to figures of the opposition such as Mohamed Osman Al Mirghani. Due to the importance of this period the researcher will provide a separate section on this topic. The following sections shows the details of this period 1989-2005.

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<sup>590</sup> Idris Salim Al Hassan, *Religion in Society: Nemeiri and the Turuq 1972-1980*, Khartoum University Press, 1993, p.84.

<sup>591</sup> Ibid.

<sup>592</sup> Gabriel Warburge, *Islam, Sectarianism and Politics in Sudan Since The Mahdiyya*, The University of Wisconsin Press, 20003, p. 153.

<sup>593</sup> Abdel Latif El Boni and Abdel Latif Sied, op.cit., p.31.

## 6.5 Why the *Ingazh* Government was tolerant to *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*?

The researcher thinks that different reasons are behind the tolerance of the *Ingazh* government towards *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*.

1) First reason: The lack of political legitimacy suffered by the *Ingazh* government. This fact led the government to depend on the media and the small Sufi orders. Al Bashir emphasized that the media must reflect Islamic values, mobilize the public behind the national goals of the regime, and protect the Sudan from the “western foreign mass invasion.”<sup>594</sup> In any revolution the media is as important as education and the national radio station is usually the first building to be seized. The coup d'état of 30 June was not an exception. The media was firmly instructed to support, not to criticize the regime and its policies.<sup>595</sup> In addition to the media, small Sufi orders were addressed to support the Islamic project of the *Ingazh* government such as the center of *Shaikh Dafa'alla Al Sa'im* whose funeral in 1992 was televised and was attended by many figures of the *Ingazh* government.

2) Another important reason is that *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* did not represent any threat to the social or *political status quo*, i.e he did not represent any threat to the *Ingazh* government. On the contrary he participated in the first conference of the National Islamic Front, though he was not a political activist.<sup>596</sup> Whether he was supporter of the *Ingazh* government or not is not clear, yet he has strong relations with all figures of the *Ingazh* government.<sup>597</sup> *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* did not oppose the trends of the *D'awa Shamila* as long as it entails resorting to the Holy Qura'n and Prophetic tradition. In an interview with *Shaikh Al Nur*, son of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, he said that the notion that governed *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* in his relation with the *Ingazh* government is that anyone who deceive us with religion we are deceived for him. (*man khad'ana bi el Din inkhad'ana lahu*).<sup>598</sup> It is found that Sudan's Islamic-oriented government has accepted this Sufi movement of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* after its leaders did not challenge application of *Shari'a*.<sup>599</sup> The researcher thinks that he supported the *Ingazh* government but with some reservations that helped him to be neutral and keep his independence. This independence from the government is caused by his being a social reformer addressing large disciples of different political background throughout the Sudan.

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* was the most near Sufi figure to the *Ingazh* government. The researcher think that being builder of a new Islamic civil society, it is implicit that *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* agreed to the *Ingazh* Islamic programme. However, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* might have some reservations on the implementation of the Islamic project.<sup>600</sup> Considered as a

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<sup>594</sup> Ibid, p.121.

<sup>595</sup> Robert O. Collins, op.cit., p.108.

<sup>596</sup> Abdel Latif Al Boni and Abdel Latif Saied, op.cit., p.31. It is significant to mention here that Al Boni and Saied did not give any details on the participation of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* in this conference that took place in the third democratic era. (1985-1989).

<sup>597</sup> Ibid.

<sup>598</sup> Interview with *Shaikh Al Nour Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai*, Khartoum, 28 June 2007.

<sup>599</sup> “Leading Sudanese Sufi Islamic Leader Dies”, Associated Press, Sudantribune, 21 February 2005.

<sup>600</sup> In an interview with *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* in Al Zariba in Northern Kordofan State on 3 and 4 January 2000, the researcher tried to reveal the stance of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* in implementation of *Shari'a* during Nimeiri's regime and during the *Ingazh* government, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* refused to reply, saying that he is a Sufi *Shaikh* and he has to do with *el-Tarbiyya el-Sufiyya*. He refused to talk on the issue of implementation of the *Shari'a* under the *Ingazh* government. This stance gives the researcher the impression that *Shaikh Al*

supporter, President Al Bashir visited Al Zariba as early as 1993 in order to attend public marriages.<sup>601</sup> Later on *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai's son Hashim was elected to the National Assembly in 1996.<sup>602</sup>

3) Another important reason behind the tolerance of the government towards *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is the wide number of his disciples throughout Sudan that gives the Sufi center a political significance. Martin Van Bruinessen realized this in his study on Sufism in Indonesia and he states that:

Since the 1980s, the Sufi orders have been receiving wider attention again. They appear to be finding a new following in urban educated circles. The number of their followers give them a political significance and have caused certain *Shaikhs* to become involved in political rivalries<sup>603</sup>

4) The fourth important reason behind the tolerance of the *Ingazh* towards Al Bur'ai is the instructive nature of the poetry of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai which is deeply lacked by the Islamic movement after it had transformed into a completely political movement with no spiritual or instructive aspect. The poetry of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was used in the mobilization in the Popular Defense camps.<sup>604</sup> By October 1993, Turabi stated frankly that the army should be "dissolved" into the Popular Defense Forces (PDF) that would mobilize the public behind the *jihad*. Sadiq Al-Mahdi had proposed a Popular Defense Force in 1988, but set aside the idea due to overwhelming opposition from the military high command. Al Bashir called the Popular Defense Force "the legitimate child of the armed forces," which would be the "school for national and spiritual education." Through the Popular Defense Force "the Sudanese citizen's mind can be remolded and his religious consciousness enhanced" and the regime can "restructure and purify society." The PDF had four distinct components: (1) Arab tribal militias, (2) National Islamic Front volunteers, (3) drafted students and civil servants, and (4) enrolled teenagers. So the instructive nature of the poetry of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was fit to religious mobilization. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai's case could be considered within this generalization. Another reason is that the Islamic movement tried to overcome the weakness of *tarbiyya* (instructions) by using the poetry of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai which contains Islamic values in general and Sufi values in particular. The researcher thinks that this is the reason behind the adoption of the *Madih* of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai in the Popular Defence Forces Camps.<sup>605</sup> The *Madih* of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai provided them with the *tarbiyya al Suffiya*.

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Bur'ai have some reservations on the experience of *Shari'a* implementation even under the *Ingazh* government with which he has strong ties.

<sup>601</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Burai' Al Sudan*, op.cit., pp.67-68.

<sup>602</sup> Ibid.

<sup>603</sup> Martin Van Bruinessen, "Studies of Sufism and The Sufi orders in Idonesia", *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, Vol. 38, Issue. 2, July 1998, p. 200.

<sup>604</sup> According to Hasan Makki in Al Boni and Saied, op.cit., p.6.

<sup>605</sup> Interview with Khalid Abu El Rish, Khartoum, 20 May 2003.

5) The excessive *karama* making abilities of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* which attracted high officials of the *Ingazh*.<sup>606</sup> Those officials include State ministers, *Walis* who seek to be appointed in the State hierarchy.

6) As mentioned above, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* though supported the *Ingazh* regime, he kept independent political stance. The political independence or neutrality of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* stemmed from being a social reformer. Also because his disciples were from different political backgrounds. This neutrality towards politics led later to de-politicization of some sections of the educated middle class. This de-politicization was a credit for the *Ingazh* government which from the start antagonized the enlightened educated. This class was historically the vanguard of all political mobilization against any military government after Independence. The de-politicization of some sections of the educated class was behind the rise of individualism among this strata, which is known for its political activism in the past. Sufism helped many members of the this strata to look for individual solutions to their problems.

Under the leadership of Dr. Turabi a wave of anti-Sufism was very evident in the general trend of the Islamic movement in Sudan. The plan of Dr. Turabi was to contain all Sufi *tariqa* under the umbrella of the Islamic movement. However this trend was defeated after the political conflict between President Al Bashir and Dr. Turabi. This trend was also defeated because Sufi *tariqas* in Sudan have different political stances and most of them are not centralized. This anti-Sufi trend led by Dr. Turabi could not suppress the growing phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. After Dr. Turabi and President Al Bashir dispute it was evident that *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* was completely welcomed by the state officials.<sup>607</sup> Consequently *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* got a remarkable status, to the extent that President Al Bashir inaugurated Al Bur'ai's campus in Khartoum in 2001.<sup>608</sup> Also to the extent of being invited by the Presidency to attend the celebrating session of peace talks between the *Ingazh* government and the SPLA, in Nairobi in Nivasha.<sup>609</sup>

## **6.6 Sources of Power of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai***

### **6.6.1 Manifestations of the Strength of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai***

The researcher realized that there is a changing role of the small Sufi orders in Sudan. As mentioned before, the small Sufi orders used to benefit from the disciples in order to run the expenses of the *Khalwa* or the center. The new role of these Sufi centers is that disciples are benefiting financially, economically and socially from these centers. The strength of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is manifested in the following:

1) Providing financial support: Through his strong links with Head of States (Nimeiri and Al Bashir) and state ministers, Al Bur'ai was able to help thousands of those

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<sup>606</sup> From an interview of grandson of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* the researcher got to know that many high officials of the *Ingazh* government used to come to *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* for solving personal problems. Interview with Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, Khartoum, 13 May 2006.

<sup>607</sup> One of the daughters of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* told the researcher that President Al Bashir came to her father in a visit and was initiated into Sufi *tariqa* by Al Bur'ai himself. Interview with Safa Abdel Rahim Al Bur'ai, Al Zariba, Kordofan, 4 January 2000.

<sup>608</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Burai Al Sudan*, (the new version) op.cit., p.223.

<sup>609</sup> Abdalla Adam Khatir, "*Al Bur'ai Ahsin fiman 'Adak*", Al Sahafa News papers, No.4213, 26 February 2005, p.11.

came to him seeking his help either by using his contacts to solve their problems or by giving them financial support.

2) Expansion of charity work: The researcher thinks that his strong links with high state officials enabled him to expand his religious charity works.

3) Re-appointment of layed off for public use: *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai's contacts enabled him to help many of those layed off for public use by the state to be appointed in different jobs. It is significant to mention that *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai has special relations with the Sudanese businessmen, among whom large numbers used to be initiated into Sufism under his supervision and who seek the *baraka* for their business. They belief that their business will grow and get high profits when getting *al Fatiha* of Al Bur'ai. This includes also head of state institutions such as Kenana Sugar Company who brought him to the factory in order to bless the harvest and the heads of Sudan Airways who seek his *baraka* and blessings to their projects.<sup>610</sup> Also *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was invited by the Sudanese Ministry of Energy to attend the inauguration ceremony of Bashier Port for exporting oil.<sup>611</sup>

4) *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai's role during the famine that struck Sudan in 1983-4 was very clear when he opened his stores which used to contain ten to fifteen thousand sacks of grain to feed the hungry people of Kordofan and those coming from Darfur.<sup>612</sup>

5) The vast financial ability of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai is reflected in building different mosques and institutions. In 1969 Al Bur'ai built the first *Zawiyya* outside Al Zariba in El Obied. In 1981 he built a mosque in Omdurman in Umbadda. In 1983 he inaugurated the Islamic Campus in El Obeid. In 1984, he inaugurated the Islamic Campus in Um Dam Haj Ahmed, Al Zariba is administratively part of this locality. In 1993, Al Bur'ai inaugurated the Islamic Campus at Wad Medani and Um Ruwaba. Different mosques have been established by him in different parts of the Sudan. It is found that *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was able to build mosques in *wad* Al Jalib, El Mazroub, Miriaikha, Bara town, Al Diwaim, Sinnar and Port Sudan. This is in addition to his big Islamic Campus in Khartoum (*al Mujahideen*).<sup>613</sup> According to *Shaikh* Al Fatiha, his successor, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was able to build eighty mosques throughout the Sudan that includes Darfur, Sinnar and the southern region.<sup>614</sup>

Therefore high rank state contacts and the huge financial ability in addition to his being famous of *baraka* are behind his transformation into a national figure.

### 6.6.2 Financial Ability of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai

*Shaikh* Al Bur'ai has huge financial abilities. This huge financial ability is caused by:

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<sup>610</sup> Sudan Airways made special flights to El Obied for those who wanted to attend the funeral of Al Bur'ai in Al Zariba, in Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed (ed.) *Al Shaikh Al Bur'ai Badrun*., op.cit., p.145.

<sup>611</sup> Kamal Hasan Bakhait, "*Ayam Al Faqd Al Jalal*" (Days of Horrible Loss), in Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Al Shaikh Al Bur'ai Badrun Adha Al Dujunaa*, Al Asbat Centre, Khartoum, 2006, p. 107.

<sup>612</sup> Interview with Al Maiz Ahmad Idris, Omdurman, 20 December 2007.

<sup>613</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Burai Al Sudan*, 2006, op.cit, pp.115-116.

<sup>614</sup> Televised interview with *Shaikh* Mohamed El Fatiha, programme *Hilal al Bariq*, Sudanese Blue Nile TVChannel, broadcasted 25 January 2007.

1) Huge State donations in terms of lands of million Sudanese pounds in Khartoum and other states and concessions (During May regime and the *Ingazh* government),

2) Donations of Sufi centers and the disciples large number of whom are working in Gulf countries. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai had strong relations with Sufis outside the Sudan. For example, he had relations with the Qadiriyya Sufi order in Bagdad in Iraq. One of the grandsons of *Shaikh* Abdel Qadir al Jilani sent a letter to *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai asking him to send him letters informing about *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai's health and his poems on *Shaikh* Abdel Qadir in the Qadiriyya Zawiyah in Bagdad.<sup>615</sup> Also, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai has different disciples from different Islamic and non-Islamic countries. For example he has disciples in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Jordan, Syria, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Libya, and there are some disciples who studied under *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai from African countries such as Uganda, Zaire and Chad.<sup>616</sup> Some of the Gulf princes and royal families used to come to him seeking medical treatment.<sup>617</sup> This strong relation with disciples in the United Arab Emirates is evident by the fact that the Sudanese Embassy in United Arab Emirates was formally opened for receiving condolences in the death of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai from the Sudanese working there and from the Emirates people who knew *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai or were treated by him.

3) Private business (huge agricultural lands and Sesame oil factories).<sup>618</sup> *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai since 1969 was involved in commercial activities. It is found that the different centers of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai are very affluent in comparison to other Sudanese Sufi centers. As early as 1965, the center of Al Zariba had a huge generator for electricity. The manifestations of affluence is reflected in providing hundreds and hundreds with food on daily basis.<sup>619</sup> This is also clear in providing social services, such as health care in his centres.

The vast financial abilities enabled *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai to welcome thousands and thousands of the disciples who seek his Sufi teachings and help in their daily life.<sup>620</sup> According to an interview with an eyewitness, a local disciple from Kordofan coming to *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai asking him the fees of pilgrimage.<sup>621</sup> This fact indicates that *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai used to distribute money for the needy disciples. As the number of disciples increased, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai has to increase his income. His financial ability is also reflected in his involvement in huge business of sesame oil industry which was authorized as early as 1969.<sup>622</sup> In the 1970s, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai established huge oil

<sup>615</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, op.cit., p. 68.

<sup>616</sup> Ibid., p.60.

<sup>617</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Burai al Sudan*, op.cit., p.74.

<sup>618</sup> In a discussion with Abdel 'Aal Abdel Bari who is a Sammani disciple and ex-official in Islamic West Bank, the researcher got to know that *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai used to make money transfers through this bank (Islamic West Bank). Money transfers were made from El Obied to Khartoum. He was not enthusiastic to give details of these transfers. But the researcher think that they were huge amounts. Abdel 'Aal Abdel Bari, 26 November 2007, Cairo.

<sup>619</sup> Sa'ad El Din Mohammed Ahmed, *Kawkab Al 'Alam wa Failaq al Islam: El Shaikh El Bur'ai*, Sudan Currency Print House, 2007, p. 52.

<sup>620</sup> Jalal Yousif Al Digair, "Man Ahaq bi al Dam' minhu", in Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed (ed.), *Al Shaikh Al Bur'ai Badrun A'dha Al Dujuna*, op.cit., p. 27

<sup>621</sup> Interview with Al Maiz Ahmad Idriss, El Thawora Head quarter-Omdurman, 20 December 2007.

<sup>622</sup> In correspondence from Al Bur'ai to Sa'ad el Din, Sa'ad El Din Mohammed Ahmed, *Kawkab Al 'Alam wa Failaq Al Islam: Al Bur'ai*, Sudan Currency Printing Company, 2006, p.93.

industry of *Zait Al Huwar* whose production was marketed in Omdurman.<sup>623</sup> He used to transfer money from Kordofan to banks of Khartoum such as the West Islamic Bank.<sup>624</sup>

Therefore it is clear that the huge financial abilities enabled *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* to build mosques in different cities, villages throughout the whole Sudan. Another important mark of his huge financial abilities is that *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* welcomed thousands students of Quranic and Sufi studies in his strong hold of Al Zariba in Kordofan. Students were given clothes, food and shelter on daily basis.

The researcher thinks that the visit of Ex-President Nimeiri to Al Zariba led to financial help like what happened to all small Sufi centers during May regime. This financial help was intensified during the *Ingazh* government with the visit of President Omer Al Bashir to Al Zariba.<sup>625</sup> The researcher thinks that both presidents sought *Shaikh Al Bur'ai's* blessings and his support.

## 6.7 Civic Associations of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*

In Sudan, like most developing countries, institutions of civil society are historically formed by political parties. It is found unlike European states, trade unions are used to be wings of political parties. They did not develop independently as what took place in the West during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. When these political parties are weakened due to a coup d'état, all institutions of civil society retreat from daily scene. They are the cultural clubs, trade unions, charity associations etc.

Following the 1989 coup d'état, the new regime dissolved all political parties and trade unions. NGOs were required to re-register on new conditions that prohibited political engagement. Therefore restricting societal mobilization.<sup>626</sup> All political parties and political formations were banded, their activities and formations prohibited and their property confiscated by the state.<sup>627</sup> This situation pushed all political parties, except the National Islamic Front outside the political scene and hence all trade unions related to these parties.

In the period 1989-2005, this vacuum created by the retreat of political parties and trade unions happened to be filled generally by Sufism in general and *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* in particular. The above mentioned period witnessed remarkable revival of small Sufi orders in addition to *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, such as the Qadiriyya, the Sammaniyya, the Tijaniyya etc. These small Sufi orders became actors of civil society through charity work and associations.<sup>628</sup>

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<sup>623</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>624</sup> Interview with Abdel 'Aal Abdel Bari, Cairo, 27 November 2007.

<sup>625</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmad, *Bur'ai Al Sudan*, first edition, op.cit., p.56.

<sup>626</sup> Hessian Adel Ate, "Untapped Potential: Civil Society and The Search for Peace", *Conciliation Resources*, available at <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/sudan/civil-society.php>

<sup>627</sup> Sidqi Kaballo, "Sudan: Over Four Years of Fundamentalists Rule", *Review of African Political Economy*, No.58, November, 1993, p. 106.

<sup>628</sup> For example the center of *Shaikh Dafa'alla al Sa'im* in Umbadda used to host the displaced people who come from Kordofan and Darfur in big hostels. They give them shelter, cloths, food and teach them Islamic sciences. Field work conducted by the researcher for CEDEJ-Omdurman Project in the period 2000-2001.

*Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was aware of the importance of associations. He used to build a *Khalwa* for each disciple graduated from Al Zariba in his village.<sup>629</sup> These *Khalwas* reach eighty throughout Sudan. The *Khalwa* is meant to provide services to the local community. In this way he formed some sort of network throughout the Sudan. Each center provided the local people with religious education as well as mediation in tribal conflicts and providing low cost public marriages.

Regional committees of these *Khalwas* were formed to organize the festivals of public marriages. The idea of facilitating public marriages started in 1993 by asking the businessmen and merchants known by *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai to provide the cost of 2,500 marriages. Money was collected, a high committee was formed to implement this project, a store was established to make free furniture for each couple, new cloths were imported to be given to the participants.<sup>630</sup> This festival continued till the death of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai in 2005.

Provision of social services such as health care is available in the centers of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai in big cities such as Khartoum, *wad* Medani and El Obied. The *khalawi* of big cities host hundreds of students, who are given food, shelter and cloths. This fact reflects the changing role of the *khalwa*, instead of being dependant on the local community for running its day-to-day costs, it changed into provider of social services and charity works. On the other hand, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was aware that this newly marginalized strata of the educated middle class could be mobilized for social work. The intended associations of Al Bur'ai were meant to organize this strata of the middle class into societal actions and not political actions. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was aware of the importance of these social associations. These social associations mobilized the society for social actions. Here *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai addresses politics not as partisan but as social reformer.

Women were also targeted by the charity works of *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai as small institute was build in Al Zariba in order to teach women Quranic sciences, jurisprudence, Prophetic tradition and other activities such as handicrafts and sewing. This is in addition to several campaigns showing the negative aspects of female circumcision tradition.<sup>631</sup>

It is important to mention that due to the different activities of Al Zariba, there was a need for an official institution recognized by the state in order to organize these activities. The non-governmental organization of Al Zariba Charity Institution was registered officially in order to address the government for financing different projects and to address external non-Sudanese institutions in order to make new projects. Most of these projects are in the field of charity work. These projects are run by members of Al Bur'ai's family and some of the disciples.<sup>632</sup> This institution reflects the huge charity activities run by *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai and his sons. It is clear that *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was aware of the importance of charity works throughout the whole Sudan. He became an actor of civil society at a time when most activities of civil society retreated in the period 1989-2000. In addition to being builder and actor of civil society, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was famous as mediator of conflicts. The following sections shows this important social role.

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<sup>629</sup> Televised interview with *Shaikh* Mohamed El Fatih, programme *Hilal al Bariq*, Sudanese Blue Nile TVChannel, broadcasted 25 January 2007.

<sup>630</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, Bur'ai Al Sudan, first edition, op.cit., p.52.

<sup>631</sup> Ibid., p.84

<sup>632</sup> Interview with Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, Omdurman, 25 December 2007.



## 6.8 The Social Role of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*: Mediation in Conflicts

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* was famous of interference in conflicts between individuals and tribes inside Kordofan and later in Khartoum. This mediation in conflicts was intensified until it reached mediation at the national political level, which helped in his transformation into a national figure. Mediation in conflicts of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* *Shaikh* is divided into three stages. The first and the second stages were interconnected. They continued up to his death in 2005. Below are some examples:

1) The first stage, Mediation in family conflicts: *Al Bur'ai* started as mediator in family conflicts (in case of individual criminals) in Kordofan and later in Khartoum. His interference and mediation was welcomed in most cases. A famous incident took place in Nasir quarter in Khartoum city. Two students in one of Khartoum high secondary schools quarreled. One decided to kill the other. The killer was sentenced to death. The family of the killer went to *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. Then *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* came to Nasir quarter in Khartoum and met the father and mother of the killed student and convinced her to withdraw her stance in death execution on the killed. He explained to her the religious merits of forgiveness in such conditions. Then the mother of the killed who was tough in her position accepted to retreat her stance without *diya* (money paid to the family of the killed person).<sup>633</sup> The case was cancelled in the court.

Another incident is that a man killed another one, the case was presented to the penal court that decided to execute the killer. The family of the killer went to *Shaikh Al Burai* asking him to mediate in the problem. Before the execution was made, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* met the judge asked him to delay the execution. The judge agreed and then *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* made reconciliation between the family of the victim and the family of the killer and the deal was accepted by both sides. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* paid the *Diyya*.<sup>634</sup> These incidents explain the social influence of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*.

2) Second stage, Mediation in tribal conflicts (where conflicts over pasture and water sources were solved peacefully by him): *Shaikh Al Bur'ai's* mediation in most cases was accepted by both conflicting parties. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* has strong relation with leaders of tribes in Kordofan. He had strong relations with *Shaikh Adam Abu Qadam*, Nazir of Hawawir, and *Shaikh Wad el Iesir*, Nazir of the Kawahla tribe, *Shaikh Mohamed el Obaid Akkam*, Nazir of the Shanabla and *Shaikh Saied Madibo*, Nazir of the Rezieqat.<sup>635</sup> As a result of these strong relations with tribes' leaders *Al Bur'ai* was able to mediate in tribal conflicts.

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai's* mediation in tribal conflicts in Kordofan was very famous. One example of this mediation is his role in solving the problems between the Majanin and the 'Ariffiyya tribes in the Mazroub area. The problem was on pasture land, those who were killed were forty persons. When *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* knew about this he met the leaders of the two tribes, his mediation was accepted and a peaceful solution was reached. Both sides accepted the mediation of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*.<sup>636</sup>

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<sup>633</sup> Interview with Al Maiz Ahmed Idris, Omdurman, 27 April 2007.

<sup>634</sup> Interview with Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, Omdurman, 25 December 2007.

<sup>635</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Bur'ai Al Sudan*, second edition, op.cit., p.71.

<sup>636</sup> Interview with *Shaikh Khalid Abdel Rahim*, Khartoum, 4 November 2007.

An incident took place around Al Zariba area in the Gawam'a tribe's area. Drunk people made conflicts and as a result five persons were killed, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* stepped in and made a mediation between the clans of the killed and the killers. A peaceful solution was reached.<sup>637</sup>

Desertification is evident in the last three decades in Sudan in general and Western Sudan in particular. Environmental deterioration caused tribal conflicts over the growing limited resources. Armed raids on rich agricultural areas and skirmishes with rival groups are not a new phenomenon for the nomadic herders, constituting a survival strategy in the face of natural calamity and threatened destitution that enables the maintenance of their social fabric.<sup>638</sup> In the 1980s the pattern of inter-tribal conflict changed from the low-intensity, small-scale confrontations that characterized the 1950s to the 1970s. These early conflicts were predominantly clashes between nomadic groups over access to pasture and water or theft of animals. However, since the mid-1980s there has been a more systematic drive by the nomads to occupy agricultural land.<sup>639</sup> Local mechanisms of solving tribal conflicts through tribal leaders is weakened. The weakness of state apparatus in these nomadic areas caused the need of the intervention of religious men. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* played the role of mediator in tribal conflicts over pasture and agricultural land. Most of his mediation in Kordofan was accepted and people achieve stability. Another incident took place in Northern Kordofan between the Ziyadiyya and the Baz'aa clans where many people were killed. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* stepped in and a peaceful solution was reached.<sup>640</sup>

3) Third stage, Mediation at the national level between the government and the opposition: When coming to Khartoum and through his daily contacts with different politicians, Sudan problems became part of his concern. The popularity of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is reflected by the fact that many people asked him to mediate in the north-South conflict. What is striking of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is that he disseminated the idea of making a peaceful end to the war in Southern Sudan. This fact made him popular among the southerners when he was in Nivasha. He says:

البرعى لكم صاح و ضارب البورى  
لتوقفوا حرب الجنوب يا حبورى<sup>641</sup>

Al Bur'ai cried on you in order  
to stop the South war my friends.

According to his biographer, Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, a group of the Dinka tribe visited *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, asking him to pray for stopping the civil war and they were welcomed by him. This reflects the independent stance of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* as well as being appreciated by all political factions.

<sup>637</sup> Interview with Al Maiz Ahmed Idris, Al Thawra-Omdurman, 28 February 2008.

<sup>638</sup> UNICEF, "Eight grassroots conflicts in Sudan", March 2004.

<sup>639</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>640</sup> Interview with *Shaikh Khidir Abdel Rahim*, Omdurman, 31 March 2008.

<sup>641</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed (ed.), *Al Shaikh Al Burai Badrun*, op.cit., p.69.

Mediation in national conflict transformed *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai into a practitioner of politics without being politician. This point will be explained in the following section.

## 6.9 Practice of Politics as a Social Reformer

As mentioned before, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was not a political activist who belong to any political party or sect, however he was very near to politics.<sup>642</sup> His engagement in with politics stemmed from his role as social a reformer that obliged him to have strong relations with all politicians. This fact leads us to a new definition of politics. In other words, practice of politics as result of being a builder of new civil society and being social reformer.

Despite Al Bur'ai's neutral stance form practicing politics, it is found that he has full access to the Presidential Palace in Khartoum. This was very clear during the May and the *Ingazh* regimes. The different invitations sent to him by the Presidential Palace to attend different occasions are a good evident. These invitations were very often during the *Ingazh* government. For example he was invited by Minister of Energy to attend the inauguration of Bashai'r Port of oil export.<sup>643</sup>

In the discussion of the *Ingazh* government and Sufism, it was clear that *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai supported the *Ingazh* government, but with some reservations. These reservations show the independence needed of a social reformer. In his relation towards politics *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai had a neutral stance towards different and sometimes opposing politicians. According to his biographer, Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, he welcomed different politicians such as Mohamed Othman al Mirghani, Sayyid Sadiq Al Mahdi, President al Bashir and Dr. Hasan Al Turabi and earlier President Nimeiri.<sup>644</sup> It is significant to mention that he managed to overcome the different political loyalties of his followers. In his circle in Al Zariba, you find members of all colours of political parties and sometimes antagonistic. The disciples and visitors who come to see him include, the Unionists, members of the Umma Party, members of National Islamic Front, members of the Communist Party and even *Ansar al Sunna* who used to condemn Sufi *Shaikh.s*.<sup>645</sup> On the other side he met different ex-Presidents of the Sudan, such as Islamail al Azhari (during his support of the Unionists), President Abboud and Head of Transitional Command Council, Suwar al Dahab.<sup>646</sup>

Another fact shows the intimate relation between *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai and the Presidency. In the inauguration of his mosque in *Al Mujahideen* quarter in Khartoum, President Al Bashir, who attended the inauguration formed a committee of Suwar al Dahab, Majzub al Khalifa and fifteen other officials to build a hospital in the mosque under the supervision of the Ministry of Health.<sup>647</sup> This hospital was meant to provide free medical care.

*Shaikh* Al Bur'ai had strong relations with the different hierarchies of the *Ingazh* government. It is stated that President Al Bashir gave a donation for the religious

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<sup>642</sup> El Boni and Saied, op.cit., p.22.

<sup>643</sup> Kamal Hasan Bakhait, "*Ayam al Faqd al Jallal*", in Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, (ed.), op.cit., p.107.

<sup>644</sup> Ibid, p. 56.

<sup>645</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, *Bur'ai al Sudan*, 2006, op.cit., p.66.

<sup>646</sup> Ibid.

<sup>647</sup> Ali Al Sadiq Al Basir, "*Al Shaikh Al Bur'ai: Shaghlata Kulaha bi Al Adab*", in Ibid., pp.114-115.

activities (preaching) of Al Zariba in 1993. Al Bur'ai thought that the President will give a donation for helping the project of common marriages. Through his links with the *Wali* of Northern Kordofan State, Al Hussaini Abdel Karim, Al Bur'ai announced in the State Radio that the donation of the President will be transferred to the youth who participated in the Common Marriages.<sup>648</sup> These links with the *Ingazh* government helped in the appearance of *Shaikh* Al Burai as strong economic enterprise to play the role of quazi-state inside Northern Kordofan by feeding people and providing health care. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was very simple in his life and appearance. From the field trip the researcher found that all luxury aspects of life were prepared for his visitors and not for himself or his family who lived a very modest life.

#### 6.10 Is *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai Genuine Reformer or is a byproduct of The Media?

It is worth to mention that *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was aware of the role of the media in spreading his doctrine and his Sufi teachings. Though this awareness was relatively recent (1990-2005) it played a great role in the transformation of Al Bur'ai into a popular figure throughout the Sudan. Before that, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was known to a limited circle of disciples who seek his help and guidance.

The transformation into a national figure came through the official recognition by different para-state or private institutions. First he was awarded Doctorate of Honour from the Omdurman Islamic University in 1986.<sup>649</sup> In 1991 he was awarded Badge of Al Nilain in Arts by the Head of the State, the same as Abd Allah Al Tayyib, Abd Allah Al *Shaikh* Al Bashir and the singer Ahmed Al Mustafa in a public festival. Later he was awarded the Doctorate of Honour from Al Jazira, Al Nilain and Kordofan Universities. Also he was awarded a Medal of Excellence by the Embassy of Egypt in Sudan in 1993. This process led *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai to be the most popular and most famous Sufi *Shaikh*. It is significant to mention that *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai met *Shaikh* Zaied, the former President of the United Arab Emirates and Yasir Arafat.<sup>650</sup> However his biographer did not give any details of these meetings, i.e, their dates and what was the outcome. The researcher expects that these relations with head of the United Arab Emirates provided financial donations to Al Zariba center.

As mentioned before, *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was not a political activist, however he attended the sensitive final moments of Nivasha agreement in Kenya. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai went to Nivasha as a response to the Presidential Palace invitation to attend and bless the peace agreement between the central government in Khartoum and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement. His travel to Kenya was facilitated by the Presidency, as he has strong tie with Ali Osman the Vice President. It was the latter who invited him to go to Nivasha. *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was among the other Sufi figures who were invited to Nivasha. They were Professor Hasan Al Fatih Qarib Allah of the Sammaniyya order in Omdurman, *Shaikh* Seif Al Din Abu Al 'Azaim of the 'Azmiyya order and Professor Abdel 'Al Al Idrisi of the Idrisiyya *tariqa*<sup>651</sup>, however *Shaikh* Al Bur'ai was the most

<sup>648</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>649</sup> Ibid.

<sup>650</sup> Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed, op.cit., p.117.

<sup>651</sup> "Hiwar al Tariq wa al Haraka Al Sha'biyya: Ma bayn Al Bur'ai wa Garang", Al Sahafa newspaper no.3997, 14 July 2004.

important. He was welcomed by both parties. Dr. John Garang visited him in his residence and then brought his family to meet him. It is said that *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* told John Garang that he made marriages for forty southerners in Al Zariba.<sup>652</sup>

The central government looked at him as a holy man and *karama* maker while the SPLM looked at him as a figure of political and religious tolerance. He was looked at by the opposition and the SPLM as a hope in ending the project of political Islam in Sudan.<sup>653</sup>

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* represented a charismatic leader upon whom the Sudanese united. A father for all of them, especially members of the middle class. The consensus upon *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* as a social reformer in the late 20<sup>th</sup>, resembled the consensus upon the Mahdi in 19<sup>th</sup> century, though the latter was revolutionary and led a highly organized political movement.

State-run television showed the Vice President, Ali Osman Mohammed Taha participated in the funeral of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*.<sup>654</sup> His death was considered as state-loss, and he was considered as national figure. In the official statement of the government declaring the death of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*:

"The Sudanese nation has lost one of its pillars, a man who was a model to be copied in working for people's interests,"

According to Yasser Arman, spokesman of the Sudan People's Liberation Army, "We are missing a man who had boosted peace efforts ... and encouraged everybody to reach a peaceful solution,"<sup>655</sup> After the death of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, Yasser Arman stated that:

"The SPLM is sorry for the loss of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. He came himself to Nivasha and met Dr. John Garang, head of the SPLM and he encouraged every one to reach peace. The SPLM will work with the Sufi orders to build cooperation with religions to strengthen values of love and tolerance".<sup>656</sup>

The secret newspaper of the Sudanese Communist party *Al Midan* announced its condolence for the death of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*.<sup>657</sup> This fact reflects the wide popularity of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* among different Sudanese political factions.

This consensus over *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* led the researcher to the conclusion that he is a genuine social reformer and not a mere product of the Media.

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<sup>652</sup> "Fi Dai'rat Al Dhaw: Mawi'd ma' al Zariba", available at: [www.alsahafa.info/inde.php](http://www.alsahafa.info/inde.php).

<sup>653</sup> Asma al Husayni, *Al Bur'ai Adam al Sudan: Al Bashir wa al Turabi wa Garang fi Gulbab Hazha al Ragul* (Al Bur'ai Adam of the Sudan: Al Bashir, Al Turabi and Garang are inside the cloths of this man), Al Ahram Newspaper, 12 March 2005.

<sup>654</sup> "Leading Sudanese Sufi Islamic leader dies", Associated Press, Sudantribune, February 21, 2005.

<sup>655</sup> Ibid.

<sup>656</sup> Abu Bakr Al Qadi, "Al Shaikh Al Bur'ai Mujadid Madrasat al Ghazali al Sulukiyya", in Abdel Rahim Haj Ahmed (ed.), *Al Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. op.cit., p.45.

<sup>657</sup> *Al Midan* secret newspaper, no.1999, Dec. 2004-January/ February 2005, p.13.

## 6.11 Conclusion

It could be concluded that *Shaikh Al Buarai* appeared as provider of ethical norms to a society suffering from political instability and disruption of social fabric resulted by political policies on one side and economic policies on the other side. Attraction of the increasing marginalized middle class to *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is caused by different reasons. It is found that providing psychological satisfaction to members of the middle class led to its political apathy.

The vacuum created by the retreat of political parties and civil society as a result of the coup d'état of the *Ingazh* government was filled by small Sufi orders in general and *Shaikh Al Bu'ai* in particular. The charity work of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* and his Sufi associations that provided health care, education and projects for low cost marriages filled this vacuum. Associations made by *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* were meant to organize the marginalized strata of the middle class into societal actions and not political actions. Here *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* practiced politics as a social reformer, who is interested in empowering the community as a whole. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* by building and providing support for different *khalawi* for disciples graduated from Al Zariba, he built social institutions that disseminated the message of an empowering local community in different parts of Sudan. This message of societal uplifting through building quasi-state institutions is meant to serve the people various needs as means to establish the virtuous independent individual.

## CONCLUSION

It could be concluded that there is difficulty faced by the modern sociologists and political scientists to analyze the phenomenon of Islamic revival in general and Sufi revival among a social strata used to be secular throughout the Islamic world. This difficulty in part stems from the difficulty of making precise definition of the middle class among which revival of Sufism took place in different Islamic countries.

Revival of Sufism among the middle class represents a challenge to the traditional theories of social sciences that consider Sufism as a vanishing phenomenon due to the process of modernization and education. However the revival of Sufism among educated and modern forces of the Islamic countries in Sudan, Turkey, Indonesia and Malaysia represents a new challenge to theories of social sciences. For this reason a new form of theoretical framework is needed to understand this phenomenon.

It is found that by 1970s, the Sudanese middle class or the *effendiyya* were subjected to a process of withering of their cultural and economic base. This process resulted from state policies that advocated the measures of IMF and IBRD in leading the Sudanese economy. These processes were culminated in the 1990s, when the state withdrew from its social role and adopted drastic process of liberalization and state retreat from supporting health and education, liberalizing the market while fixing the salaries. The result of this was impoverishment of the middle class and that the *effendiyya* lost their ability to pursue and continue their links with cultural circles in the west. The result was a withering Westernized culture, that the educated used to advocate and thus started a search for a new ideation and new beliefs. This new ideation happened to be religious and among Sufi circles. A mass revival of Sufism as is shown in the case of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is an evident of this phenomenon. In most cases this Sufi revival took the form of rural Sufism as the case of *Al Zariba* in *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, the *Sammaniyya* in *Karkoj* in the case of *Sharif Muhammad Al Amin* or the *Qadiriyya* in the case of center of *Abu Haraz* in the 'Arakiyyin. All these rural centers found grounds in Khartoum among the educated middle class. Therefore the phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* could be understood within this background.

The doctrine of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* represents a moderate Sufi doctrine. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* by his insistence on the mediation of the Prophet directly represents neo-Sufi link and not through mediation of the holymen, a fact that attracted the educated middle class. The Sufi order of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is an open edged *tariqa*. In other words its membership is open for any person. He was not outside the boundaries of the Islamic law (*Shari'a*) however; he adopted *Karama* as a basic concept in Sufism. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* combined the essence of Sudanese Sufism found in the descriptions of *Wad Dhayf Allah* in the seventeenth century which is full of *karama* (miracles) doing with the characteristics of the Sufi-Scholar of the neo-Sufi *tariqas* of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Neo-Sufism is reflected in *Shaikh Al Bur'ai's* poetry in which he glorified mediation of the Prophet only. In otherwords, the disciple is not in need of any *Shaikh* if he is praying on the Prophet. This fact attracted the middle class to the poetry of *Al Bur'ai* and his Sufi teachings.

The most important factor in the development of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* in addition to his *Madih* is the reputation of him as *karama* maker and one who possessed *baraka*. Possession of *karama* abilities and miracle doing is considered the main reason of the transformation of a saint into a charismatic figure. The

glorification of healing abilities of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, according to the researcher, is caused partly by the retreat of the state from providing medical care in the rural areas and in Khartoum. Many people came to him seeking curing of normal illness such as Malaria, fever, etc. that could be treated by a physician.

It is clear that the poetry of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* equates litanies. In other words, poetry represents a means of performing Sufi rituals. The poetry of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* represents a complement to litanies. Some poems are treated as if they are litanies as they bring blessings and salvation. This twining of poetry and litanies of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* suited the educated middle class. As every one could upgrade himself in the Sufi path by performing litanies and listening to *Shaikh's* poetry. Moreover, the individual can achieve his needs by doing litanies only, without the intercession of any Sufi *Shaikh*, not even *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* himself. It is an individualist way of self-purification that attracts the educated middle class.

Poetry represents an important tool of attracting the educated Sudanese to be sons of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*. Any person who listens and contemplates *Shaikh Al Bur'ai's* poetry is considered as his son (disciple). In this way it attracted the educated Sudanese. Poetry of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* represented an efficient tool in social change and in religious and Sufi re-ideation of the Sudanese society. The phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* could be considered as a phenomenon of reviving the Sudanese popular Sufism against the Wahabi incursion in Sudan. What is striking in the poetry of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is that it has been popular among the educated middle class with its colloquial version. Here *Al Bur'ai* depended on the rich tradition of Sufi *Madhi* in Sudanese culture in general and the Sammaniyya *tariqa* in particular.

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* was transformed from an individual *faki* in Kordofan into a national figure during the *Ingazh* government. The vacuum created by the retreat of political parties and civil society as a result of the coup d'état of the *Ingazh* government was filled by small Sufi orders in general and *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* in particular. The charity work of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* and his Sufi associations that provided health care, education and projects for low cost marriages filled this vacuum. Associations formed by *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* were meant to organize the marginalized strata of the middle class into societal actions and not political actions. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* by building and providing support for different *khalawi* for disciples graduated from *Al Zariba*, he built social institutions that disseminate the message of *Al Bur'ai* in different parts of Sudan. This message of societal uplifting through building quasi-state institutions is meant to serve the people various needs as means to establish the virtuous society the virtuous independent individual. Therefore, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* practiced politics as a social reformer, who is interested in empowering the community as whole.

Studying the phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* shows why religion is addressed as a refuge for the educated groups in Sudan. Recent writings paid attention to this retreat of secular forces and the sequent trend of religiosity. This came as part of the general move in the Middle East to resort to religion, weakness of civil society and the revival of religion, regionalism and ethnicity in current politics. In fact religion is called during crisis, religion is useful in political strategies as it leads to political realignments and religion re-inforce social processes after social and economic crisis. Therefore, the phenomenon of transformation of forces used to be secular to Sufism as in the case of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* in Sudan could be compared to the phenomenon in Turkey, Egypt, Morocco, Indonesia and Malaysia.

It is stated that a religion (Sufi phenomenon) based on charismatic authority is usually inherently unstable. Charismatic leaders as individuals have two relevant



means through which they can appeal to a group of followers: their unique personal style and the content of their teachings. With the death of charismatic leaders, the dynamics of the personality are no longer a major factor. The extra-ordinary quality resulting from the leaders' personal confrontation with chaos (crisis) dies with them, and all that remains is their legacy and group of followers. In a word, with the leaders absence, the quality of their teachings are left exposed without refuge to their creator's personality or defense and they must pass the test of time. Describing this critical period in a neophyte religion existence, O'Dea uses the term "crisis of continuity", which is essentially similar to what Weber calls the problem of succession. It is stated that the two crucial variables for the institutionalization of a religion are the quality of the leader's teachings and the organization of his followers.

The researcher thinks that the atmosphere that created the charismatic *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* is the crisis atmosphere dominated in Sudan since the 1970s, without this crisis the development of *Shaikh Al-Burai'* would have been restricted into an ordinary individual *faki*.

In the phenomenon of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*, the researcher has to develop a new definition of politics. Here politics came as a result of dealing with issues of civil society. *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* was not a politician but he was dealing with politics from his stance as a social reformer. Being runner of huge *charity khalawi* throughout the Sudan that provided religious education, Sufi doctrines and social services of food, cloths and programmes for low cost public marriages, *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* had to deal with politics and politicians.

After Nivasha peace agreement on 9 January 2005, new political mechanisms came to the surface of politics in Sudan. These are the re-appearance of actors of civil society and the growing role of the political parties. Hopes for achieving peace, democratic transformation, development, and improvement of living standards were high among the Sudanese people, their political forces and civil society organizations. Under such conditions the role of religion goes back to a limited scope. The researcher thinks that the legitimacy of the government's Civilization Project after Nivasha is no longer convincing to the masses, where new issues were raised to the forefront of politics. The issues of democracy, regional social justice, political participation of the marginalized regions and even distribution of wealth will replace the old slogans.

*Shaikh Al Bur'ai* represented a safe refuge for the identity and economic crisis of the Sudanese middle class. The researcher questions that will the phenomenon continue after the death of the *Shaikh Al Bur'ai*? She thinks that the influence of poetry will continue to be celebrated in Sudanese culture and among Sufi circles, the same as the poetry of Haj Al Mahi. However, the social and political influence of the center will be negatively affected as a result of the death of *Shaikh Al Bur'ai* and as a result of the new political realities.

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